

MANUAL

FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR CIVIL PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING PROCESS

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Preface

This is the Manual for the implementation of the Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in Decision Making Process. It is aimed at encouraging civil participation in decision making processes at all levels, providing basic information on decision making processes, role of NGO and public authorities in these processes, Code as a means of public representation and involvement of citizens in decision making processes, along with the possibility of using different tools, mechanisms and methods in that process.

In addition to this, there are examples of good practice of civil participation from Montenegro, region and the European Union. This Manual is mainly intended for non-governmental organizations willing to deal with the influence on the public policy, as well as for government and local government officials, members of local and national parliaments, considering their key role in decision making process.

Manual for the implementation of the Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in Decision Making Process has been drafted as a part of the project »Active participation of civil society in shaping and implementation of public policies«, implemented by the Centre for Development of NGOs jointly with the Centre for Information Service, Co-operation and Development of NGOs (CNVOS) from Slovenia. The Project has been financed by the European Union and managed by the EU Delegation in Montenegro. The main goal of this project has been increased participation of civil society organizations in the process of shaping and implementing public policies, as well as improvement of normative and institutional framework for their participation in this process.

Within the period April – June 2011, the Code and its implementation, as well as practice from EU, region and Montenegro, were presented to principal decision makers at the national and local level, as well as to representatives of civil society organizations from Montenegro. Description of EU mechanisms for the increased civil participation, apart from this Manual, has been presented at the website of the Centre for Development of NGOs.

We would like to express our gratitude to the Centre for Information Service, Co-operation and Development of NGOs (CNVOS) from Slovenia, for the cooperation in drafting this Manual, particularly in parts related to examples of good practice of civil participation from Slovenia and other EU countries, along with the description of different mechanisms and tools of civil participation in the processes of public policies and practical guidelines for the use of the Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in Decision Making Process.

1. Introduction

The Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in the Decision-making process, which was adopted by the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe and endorsed by the Council of Ministers as a reference document of CoE in October 2009, aims at facilitating NGO participation in the political decision-making process at local, regional and national level.

It is based on actual experience of NGOs across Europe and contains a set of general principles, guidelines, tools and mechanisms for civil participation in the political decision-making process.

The Code is addressed to public authorities and civil society and can be used from local to national and international level in the dialogue and cooperation between NGOs and parliament, government and public administration.

The Code can be used by NGOs when they are:

- planning their advocacy activities
- finding ways on how to engage with public authorities
- assessing the existing cooperation
- identifying areas of improvement of the dialogue with authorities
- building awareness to their work
- promoting the key principles of a good working relationship with authorities
- developing concrete mechanisms for engagement.

The Code is also aimed at public authorities, who can:

- refer to the Code and the different possibilities of participation and interaction that exist in Europe
- take stock of their existing procedures and relationship with NGOs and see where there is room for improvement
- take necessary steps to modify their practices to encourage increased NGO participation in the decision-making process.

The Manual provides the overview of the main features of the Code, further information on tools and methods to use as well as concrete cases of good practice from Slovenia and other selected European countries, which illustrate how to get involved in the different steps of the decision-making process and what are different mechanisms that support participation of NGOs in a systematic manner across Europe. Furthermore, the Manual also contains descriptions of concrete tools for public participation. We selected only few most illustrative examples of good practices and methods. For further research we recommend following web pages: www.peopleandparticipation.net, www.partizipation.at and http://activecitizenship.net/cgi-bin/db_acn/db.cgi.

The Manual further explains

- how to use the Code as advocacy tool by finding arguments on 'why', 'when' and 'how' they should be engaged in the policy-making process,
- how to plan, implement and monitor participation process and
- how to be more efficient in the dialogue with public authorities.

2. Public participation – what and why?

Public participation is a political principle and practice that seeks and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision. The principle of public participation holds that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.

This influence by the public is no replacement for applying formal rules and principles of democracy – such as free and fair elections, representative assemblies, accountable executives, a politically neutral public administration, pluralism, respect for human rights. Public participation always existed in democracies in some form and to some extent. However, with democracy evolving further, citizens and organisations demanding greater openness and transparency, and societies and challenges becoming ever more complex, governments are now increasingly seeking to strengthen these interactions. Improving public participation can strengthen public trust in government, improve government transparency, enhance civic capacity and create more sustainable policies.

Active and effective relationships between government and the public can...

- ***Improve the quality of policies and services***

When government agencies include diverse groups in decision-making and service delivery, the agency benefits from their first-hand understanding of the issues. The agency gains new perspectives that test their assumptions and serve as a reality check.

- ***Help solve complex problems***

Social, economic and environmental problems can be complex. By bringing different networks together, government agencies gain new sources of information, build a sense of joint purpose, and increase the possibility of finding sustainable solutions.

- ***Build trust and understanding***

By building active relationships, government agencies can reduce the sense of ‘us’ and ‘them’. People develop confidence in agencies that invite participation and genuinely listen. This can build a foundation of trust that is valuable when tough decisions need to be made.

- ***Support active citizenship***

By actively engaging citizens, agencies are honouring people’s right to participate in decisions that affect them. Agencies can encourage a participatory democracy in which everyone recognises that they have a stake and a part to play.

- ***Help create an inclusive society***

People feel more powerful, more fairly treated and more valued when government acts in co-operation with diverse communities. Creating an environment where people can solve their own problems encourages self-reliance and innovation.

- ***Measure progress more effectively***

Collaboration with NGOs can improve monitoring and evaluation of community-delivered programmes. Active relationships can also enable constructive feedback on the agency’s performance.

- ***Build staff skills***

Relationship-building with NGOs and citizens offers opportunities for government agencies to build a range of communication and cross-cultural skills that are applicable in many other settings.¹

1 <http://www.goodpracticeparticipate.govt.nz/benefits-of-community-participation/index.html>

3. What are the **ROLE AND CONTRIBUTION OF NGOs** in the process of decision-making?

Throughout the process of decision-making NGOs in their different capacities and roles (as advocates, service providers etc.) can offer a wide range of expertise, knowledge and skills.

As advocates they:

- raise issues, concerns and needs for a specific user group, point of view or a general public interest that is not yet covered by legislation or other policy documents, instruments or measures,
- guarantee that consideration is given to the needs and interests of stakeholders affected by the draft policy,
- influence the decision makers before a vote,
- monitor and voice whether the policy initiative reached the intended beneficiaries and had the intended outcome for society,
- lobby for renewal of policy by expressing limitations in or side-effects of the current policy, to meet the of users or citizens.

As information providers and awareness raisers they:

- focus on public awareness raising, explanation of benefits or disadvantages and impact of policy,
- inform members, users and key citizens' groups about the drafting process, about the political decisions and their potential effect,
- share NGO findings with the public authorities, involve and represent members, users and key citizen groups,
- act as channels to reach citizens; to listen, react and inform.

As innovators they:

- develop new solutions and approaches,
- demonstrate how these may be brought onto the political agenda,
- provide solutions through the introduction of new approaches, practical solutions and concrete models which bring benefits to specific user groups.

As experts and analysts they:

- identify current and future needs in society and provide crucial perspectives,
- provide analyses and research on issues under consideration to inform and influence decision makers,
- raise additional priorities to be included in the policy draft,
- gather evidence or research on the policy's impact,
- conduct research and analysis to identify gaps in the current policy initiative and provide rationale for reformulation.

As service providers they:

- provide input to policy drafting to ensure consideration is given to their specific users' needs,
- provide input to forming policy and creating alternative or nonexistent services for a specific user group,

- monitor the effects of policies and programmes in terms of quality, sustainability, effectiveness and real case examples,
- identify obstacles and gather evidence to illustrate evolving needs that require a reformulation of policy.

As watchdogs they:

- follow the drafting process to make sure stakeholder concerns are considered,
- follow the decision-making process, making sure it is democratic, inclusive, transparent and effective,
- monitor effects of the policy, to ensure that the intended objectives are achieved,
- assess and ensure that the policy is implemented as intended.

4. What should be the RESPONSIBILITIES OF PUBLIC AUTHORITIES?

Information sharing

The Public authorities should provide up-to-date accurate and timely information:

- in an accessible format for all interested parties,
- on current consultation processes,
- on policies currently in the decision-making process,
- on implementation of policies, strategies, public tendering procedures,
- on current policy status,
- on possible review of a policy and their perception of changes needed in policy.

Procedures

- develop and adhere to a transparent decision-making process,
- provide clear, open and accessible procedures for participation,
- assure minimum consultation standards, such as clear objectives, rules for participation, timelines, contacts, etc.,
- provide adequate timelines and means for consultation to ensure participation of different levels of civil society,
- organise open consultation meetings, including invitation to all potential stakeholders,
- follow established rules and regulations for policy implementation.

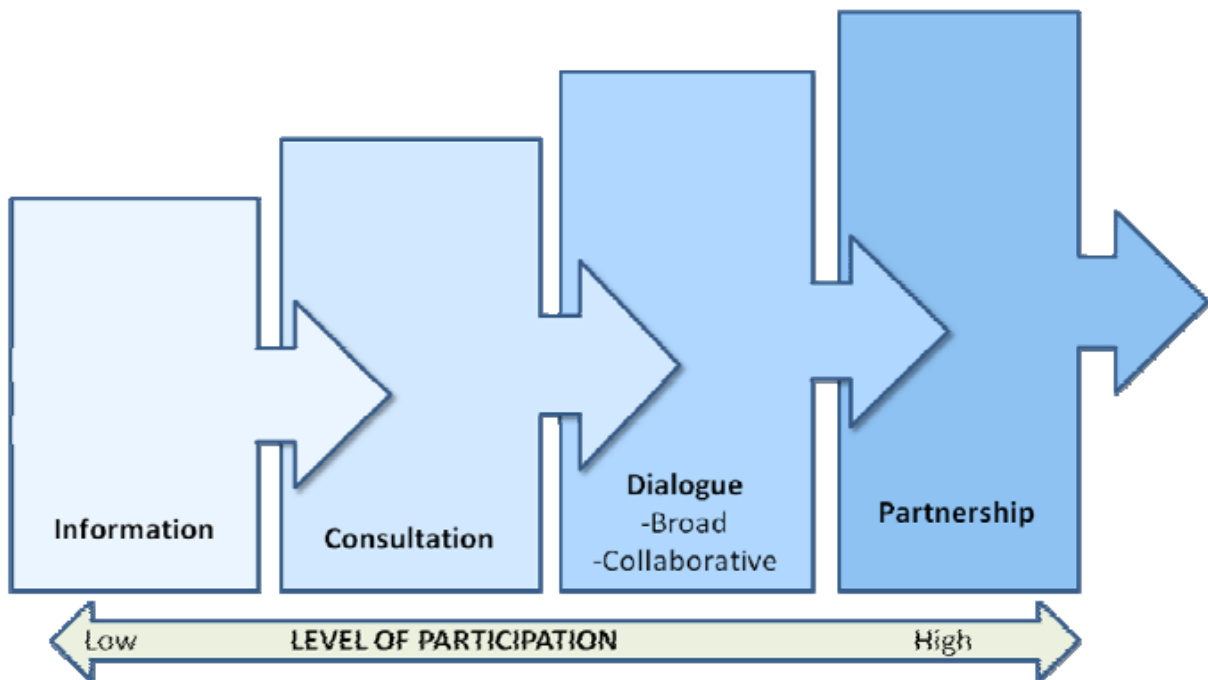
Responsiveness:

- ensure active involvement of relevant public authority representatives,
- listen, take into consideration and respond to civil society input,
- be available and react to specific needs arising from policy implementation.

Resource provision:

- enable and support the active participation of civil society through budgetary provision, in-kind support or administrative services.

5. How to achieve different LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT IN THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS?



INFORMATION

Access to information is the basis for all subsequent steps in the involvement of NGOs in the political decision-making process. This is the lowest level of participation which usually consists of a one-way provision of information from the public authorities. NGOs are thus only addressees of information and there is no interaction between them and public authorities. However, as no further level of participation is possible without accurate and timely information, this first level is necessary condition for all other steps in the decision-making process.

Montenegro: SMS NOTIFICATION AND INTERNET PORTAL

Municipality of Tivat, as one of the 5 pilot municipalities in Montenegro has been selected for co-financing projects in „Improving accountability and transparency at the local level“ financed by MATRA (Program for Social Transformation of the Holland government's for Central and East Europe), VNG International (Agency for International Cooperation of the Association of the Netherlands Municipalities) and the Union of Municipalities Montenegro. Within this project, Municipality of Tivat has opened new channels of communication with its citizens: SMS NOTIFICATION AND INTERNET PORTAL.

SMS Service – notification of changes to text messages. This involves sending a text message information to citizens on the status of their cases/requirements in the Secretariat for Spatial Planning and Environmental Protection, if the citizens are registered in the information system. After registering for this service citizens receive information about: receiving a request to the Registry with data on the number and date under which has been entered, Receipt of a request by officials in resolving authority, change of status application (fixed, approved, incomplete...), Receipt of a complaint in the case, return items in a registry, archiving objects.

Internet portal – an insight into the state of the case. The citizens who register to use web portal, after logging in to the internet portal can view all its items and documents that are in some stage of processing in local government. The information in this way can be obtained as: the status of case in process, local authority, name of the officer who is currently working on it, and the changes that had been made on the subject.

This example good practice contributes to the shortening and simplifying of procedures in obtaining various permits before the Secretariat for Spatial Planning and Environment. In addition to reducing costs and time needed to conduct the process of issuing appropriate documents the intention was to motivate the employees to finish quickly and efficiently, within the legal timeline, subjects that received.

Slovenia: Parliament's web page

Slovenian parliament on its' web page very transparently publishes draft legislation and all documents in connection to the specific draft legislation. The public can easily follow what happened to the draft throughout the legislation procedure: which amendments were submitted and passed, what other documents and materials were considered by the Parliament's bodies, etc. Under each draft the Parliament publishes all documents, comments, etc. that were received in relation to the respective draft. The web page also offers magnetographs off all sessions. (Source: CNVOS, www.dz-rs.si)

United Kingdom: 10 Downing Street Webchat

The Downing Street Website was originally set up purely as a information providing service, but has now developed more interactively. The Webchat facility on the Downing Street Website is used by a range of senior government ministers and officials. The webchats allow the general public to pose questions direct to the people who make the decisions which affect their lives. The purpose of the project is to get Ministers to respond to questions directly from the public. The public is asked to submit questions prior to the webchat (they are moderated by the Downing Street staff). The webchats are normally timed to coincide with a major event or very topical issue to gain maximum interest. The transcripts of all the webchats are available to view online. (Source: www.peopleandparticipation.net)

Tools and methods for information sharing

Information can be shared on the web page, in daily newspapers, expert magazines, through e-mails, focused leaflets and publications, public presentations, webcasting, etc.

If the issue at stake is very important and/or controversial it is very useful to appoint contact persons or open information offices, open special telephone number for information, create e-forum or e-chat, etc.

CONSULTATION

This is a form of initiative where the public authorities ask NGOs for their opinion on a specific policy topic or development. Consultation usually includes the authorities informing NGOs of current policy developments and asking for comments, views and feed-back. The initiative and themes originate with the public authorities, not with the NGOs. Consultation is relevant for all steps of the decision-making process, especially for drafting, monitoring and reformulation.

Montenegro: Drafting the Law on Non-Governmental Organizations

In compliance with the conclusion of the Government of Montenegro, brought at the session as of 13 January 2011, working group, composed of the representatives of the Government, ministries as well as the representatives of the NGO Coalition "Together towards the Goal », developed Draft Law on Non-Governmental Organizations, and following public discussion and incorporation of certain suggestions, they created Proposal of the Law on Non-Governmental Organizations. At the same time, this working group also created the Analysis of the Model of Financing from Public Funds which was submitted to the Government for consideration and adoption together with Proposal of the Law on Non-Governmental Organizations.

Draft Law on Non-Governmental Organizations was put at the public discussion on 25 March 2011 and all stakeholders were invited to submit their objections, proposals and suggestions by 14 April 2011, while the public discussion was carried out in the following manner:

- 1) by publishing the text of the Draft Law on Non-Governmental Organizations and the call for participating at the public discussion in the form of the supplement to the daily "Pobjeda";
- 2) by publishing the text of the Draft Law on Non-Governmental Organizations at the website of the Ministry of Interior (www.mup.gov.me)
- 3) by submitting Draft Law on Non-Governmental Organizations to the Council for Cooperation between the Government of Montenegro and NGO for consideration;
- 4) by organizing three round tables in Bijelo Polje, Budva and Podgorica;
- 5) by submitting Draft Law on Non-Governmental Organizations to NGOs by the means of mailing lists.

Council for Cooperation between the Government of Montenegro and Non-Governmental Organizations, at its third session, held on 6 June 2011, took Draft Law on Non-Governmental Organizations and Analysis of the Model of Financing NGOs from Public Funds into consideration and provided positive feedback on both documents. In addition to this, during the organization of round tables in Bijelo Polje, Budva and Podgorica, civil sector representatives provided great deal of comments, proposals and suggestions, which were later submitted in written form to the Ministry of Interior. The Government of Montenegro, at its session held on 16 June 2011, defined the Proposal of the Law on Non-Governmental Organizations and adopted the Analysis of the Model of Financing NGOs from Public Funds, while the Parliament of Montenegro, at its session held on 22 July 2011, adopted the Law on Non-Governmental Organizations.

Montenegro: Drafting the Law on Public Procurement

The text of the Draft Law on Public Procurement was available to all actors in the public procurement process as well as to the public at the website of the Ministry of Finance: www.mf.gov.me and Directorate for Public Procurement: www.djn.gov.me, for the sake of receiving proposals, opinions and suggestions. Public discussions were carried out involving the broadest professional public, those who are obliged to implement regulations on public discussions, NGO sector, economy sector and others. On that occasion, representatives of the "Alternativa" Institute, "Mans" NGO and the Centre of Professional Accountants submitted plenty of comments, proposals and suggestions, and also presented their proposals at the public discussions organized for the sake of adopting this law.

Slovenia: The Government's web portal E-democracy

The web portal E-democracy is a platform for information sharing and consultations. The public can follow the draft legislation from the beginning on the ministerial level to the Government's decision-making. All drafts and expert documents which served as a basis for the draft should be published on the portal. Public can send comments throughout the whole process on the specific draft or specific legislation. The responsible body is obliged to consider the comments when preparing changes of the legislation. (Source: CNVOS, <http://e-uprava.gov.si/e-uprava/edemokracija.euprava>)

Slovenia: predlagam.vladi.si

Predlagam.vladi.si (*I suggest to the Government*) is an online tool that facilitates the exchange of views and opinions on specific public issues. On the portal the public can present an issue which is still not regulated or should be regulated differently. Other users can comment the proposals or their proposed revisions. The final draft is put to the vote. If the proposal receives more votes for than against and if at least five percent of active users took part in the vote, the proposal is sent to the competent authority of the Government, which is obliged to provide an official reply. (Source: CNVOS, <http://predlagam.vladi.si/>)

United Kingdom: taking it on (online consultations)

This online consultation was about the content of the UK's sustainable development strategy. It was commissioned by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and was run by Dialogue by Design. The online process began in April 2004 and continued until the end of July 2004. The aim of the online process was to broaden the range of people consulted on the sustainable development strategy and to lessen the burden on regular consultees by making the process easier and more transparent.

The online consultation took two forms: A 'General Access' consultation process allowed members of the public and any interested organisations to respond online to the questions in the consultation document. This process was open for 12 weeks, at the end of which the results were collated and the responses made available for scrutiny on the website. In parallel to this public process, a 'Virtual Panel', representing a cross section of organisations and individuals with an interest in sustainable development, was set up to provide its views in two stages. During the first stage the panel was asked to respond to the questions in the document. Following the collation of the interim results, panel members were asked to respond to further questions based on their earlier responses. (Source: www.peopleandparticipation.net)

European Union: European Citizens Consultations 2009

In the run-up to the 2009 Euro-elections, the European Citizens Consultations 2009 (ECC 2009) gave EU citizens a voice in the debate over how to respond to the current economic and financial crisis by providing a platform for pan-European dialogue on the challenges facing the EU.

ECC 2009 had six objectives:

- Promoting interaction between citizens and policy-makers: fostering debate between citizens and policy-makers in the run-up to and after - the European elections;
- Citizens as policy advisors: feeding citizens' opinions into the political debate at both European and national levels;
- Citizen participation as a policy instrument of the future: mainstreaming trend-setting and long-term oriented citizen consultations at the European level;

- Closing the gap between the EU and its citizens: bringing the EU closer to citizens and citizens closer to the EU;
- Increasing the general public's interest in the EU: generating substantial media coverage of the dialogue between the EU and its citizens;
- Partnerships in participation: deepening European co-operation within existing civil society networks and their respective partner networks, as well as e-participation providers

In the first phase of the project, some 200,000 European citizens visited the online fora launched in each of the EU's 27 Member States in December 2008 to generate public debate and ideas on what role the EU can play in shaping our economic and social future in a globalised world. These ideas were then fed into the national consultations which took place in all 27 Member States over three weekends in early 2009. At these events, which were attended by a total of 1,600 randomly selected citizens, the participants worked to produce ten recommendations for action at EU level at each national event. All the participants were then asked to vote on all the recommendations generated by these events to choose their top 15 recommendations. Some 150 citizens who took part in the national events then travelled to Brussels for the European Citizens' Summit on May 10-11 to hand over and discuss these recommendations with top EU policy-makers, including the European Commission and Parliament Presidents and the EU Presidency. (Source: www.peopleandparticipation.net)

Tools and methods for consultations

Area Forums

Area forums are meetings held in a locality, often held by the local council. Often the meetings are attended by local councillors, together with senior representatives from the local authorities, the Police, Primary Care Trusts and other key local organisations, to debate key topics and answer residents' questions face-to-face.

The Area Forum workshops are normally run in the evenings. The session is chaired by a local Councillor. A Chief Officer also attends each meeting and ensures that the recommendations made are properly fed back into the Council's decision-making processes. Area Forums concentrate their conversations on the topics of particular concern to local communities in the area. The outcomes are reported to Area Forum members either on an individual basis or via an Area Forum newsletter, which is sent out to members after each meeting. The Minutes from each meeting are normally available online.

Area Forums provide their members with:

- information on Council services and Council policies affecting the local area.
- the opportunity to give your input on issues that affect your neighbourhood.
- a mechanism to have your say on any issue related to Council business.
- actions raised and monitored from feedback.

Citizens' Panels

A citizens' panel aims to be a representative consultative body of local residents and is typically used by statutory agencies, particularly local authorities and their partners, to identify local priorities and to consult service users and non-users on specific issues. In reality, panels are rarely demographically representative of the public and very few ensure that members represent a cross-section of political or social attitudes. Potential participants are generally recruited through random sampling of the electoral roll or postcode address file (PAF).

Once citizens agree to participate in a panel, they will be invited to, participate in a rolling programme of research and consultation. This typically involves regular surveys and, where appropriate, further in-depth research such as focus groups and workshops. Not all members will be invited to take part in all panel activities. This is why it is important to be clear at the recruitment stage about what is expected of each panel member, and what their membership is likely to entail in terms of type of contact and frequency.

Panels are largely used as a sounding board to identify local priorities, assess service needs and determine the appropriateness of service developments and policy changes. As panel members generally stay on a panel for 2-3 years, Citizens' Panels allow the tracking of opinion over time. Large panels can also be used to target specific groups (e.g. certain service users of people in a specific geographical area) for their views on issues.

ePanel/eConsultations

ePanels are a way for councils or other organisations to carry out regular online consultations with a known group of citizens.

Focus groups

Focus groups are guided discussions of a small group of citizens. They are normally one-off sessions although several may be run simultaneously in different locations. A facilitator leads a guided discussion of 6-12 people on a specific topic. A typical focus group normally lasts one or two hours and is normally recorded and a report is produced of the process and results. This is then distributed to all the participants. The focus group may be watched by the client or other interested parties. Focus groups provide useful information on how people respond to particular questions or issues, but the short amount of time limits the depth of discussion that can be had.

Use focus groups when:

- you want participants to interact in a small group,
- you are looking to explore the views of the wider population or specific groups,
- you need to understand the views of groups that would not normally respond to written questionnaires or consultations.

DIALOGUE

The initiative for dialogue can be taken by either party and can be either **broad** or **collaborative**. A broad dialogue is a two-way communication built on mutual interests and potentially shared objectives to ensure a regular exchange of views. It ranges from open public hearings to specialised meetings between NGOs and public authorities. The discussion remains wide ranging and is not explicitly linked to a current policy development process.

A collaborative dialogue is built on mutual interests for a specific policy development. The collaborative dialogue usually leads to a joint recommendation, strategy or legislation. Collaborative dialogue is more empowered than the broad dialogue as it consists of joint, often frequent and regular, meetings to develop core policy strategies and often leads to agreed outcomes. Dialogue is highly valued at all steps in the political decision-making cycle, but is crucial for agenda setting, drafting and reformulation.

Montenegro: Memorandum of cooperation between the Parliament of the Montenegro and the Network of Civil Society Organizations for Democracy and Human Rights

The initiative for the signing of **the Memorandum of cooperation between the Parliament of the Montenegro and the Network of Civil Society Organizations for Democracy and Human Rights** is launched the project „ Strengthening of Cooperation between CSOs and Parliament of Montenegro“, which was implemented by the Centre for Development of Non-Governmental Organizations, in partnership with European Center for Not- for-Profit Law (ECNL) from Budapest. Project is funded by the European Commission, and it is managed by the Delegation of the European Union in Montenegro. At the beginning a Network of Civil Society Organizations for Democracy and Human Rights is formed, which aims to strengthen cooperation, exchange of knowledge and experience in the field of democratization and human rights between Network members and members of the Network connection to the institutionalization of cooperation with the Parliament. The main activity of this project was to develop the Memorandum of cooperation between the Parliament of the Montenegro and the Network of Civil Society Organizations for Democracy and Human Rights. For this purpose formed a cross-sector working group, consisting of representatives of parliamentary working bodies, representatives of Network of Civil Society Organizations for Democracy and Human Rights, an expert from European Center for Not- for - Profit Law and coordinator of the project. This group has developed a Draft of Memorandum. This document was presented to representatives of local CSOs in three municipalities of Montenegro: Bijelo Polje, Tivat and Podgorica. Signing Memorandum has been promoted to the institutional framework for cooperation between the Parliament and CSOs,

provided conditions for the adoption of better public policies, promoting awareness of citizens about the activities within the scope of work of the Parliament of Montenegro, higher use of the consultative examination institute as well as higher interaction between civil society and parliamentary committees.

The Memorandum contains the basic principles which is based cooperation of the Parliament of Montenegro and CSOs, as well as areas and mechanism of cooperation, with full respect for the institutions of Parliament and the independence and autonomy of civil society.

Latvia: Prime-minister and State Secretary meetings

In May 2005 a memorandum establishing guidelines of cooperation between public authorities and NGOs was agreed upon. Since then the meetings and discussions between the Prime Minister and active NGOs take place twice a year. In February 2006 the Latvian Prime Minister organised a full week of discussions with representatives of national NGOs to evaluate current cooperation and to develop the system further. Through a representative of the NGO Centre in Riga, the NGOs are also regularly involved in decision-making processes by participating in weekly meetings of State Secretaries of the line ministries. (Source: Council of Europe – the case was presented within the consultation process of drafting of the Code)

Slovenia: Partnership within Structural Funds 2007-2013

In accordance with the principle of partnership, the Structural funds should help assert NGOs as an equal partner in the dialogue with the Government - in preparing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the Operational Plans. NGOs were also directly involved in the programming phase through elaborating suggested sub-programmes of the priority orientation of »Promotion of the development of NGOs, Civil and Social dialogue«. Through the project of »Identification of Target Projects for Co-funding the NGO sector from the EU Structural Funds in the 2007-2013 period«, implemented by CNVOS, 61 project outlines were received, that were identified by NGOs as pivotal for the sector's development. This set of proposals provided the guidelines for the Ministry of Public Administration when preparing the call for projects. (Source: CNVOS)

Austria: Citizens' jury for Obere Neutorgasse, Graz

The City Council of Graz unanimously agreed to extend the pedestrian precinct in Obere Neutorgasse in Graz and to conduct a public participation project beforehand with the aim of developing proposals for traffic calming in Obere Neutorgasse. The participation process started with an inforamatory meeting aimed at the general public to explain what was meant to happen. Next, residents and shopkeepers gathered ideas for traffic calming in Neutorgasse in a workshop for target groups. At a Round Table lobbyists added further suggestions. Meanwhile 65 men and women from Graz were selected at random for four study groups, the so-called citizen juries. Their work began with an introduction and as brainstorming session. Experts from city and transport planning provided them with basic information, which they supplemented on the spot in Neutorgasse. At this point the jurors worked out approaches which they concretized as actual plans. All in all they were at work on solutions for traffic calming in Neutorgasse for one evening and two full days. They received token remuneration for this. The juries' findings were discussed with the lobbyists at a Round Table. The facilitator summarized the results in the jury report, which representatives of the four juries then counterchecked. Next, the jurors presented their findings to the politicians concerned (decision-makers for the City of Graz), including the Councillor responsible for the project, who brought the results before the inner council. All the political groups on the council accepted the juries' recommendations, and budget funds were earmarked accordingly. (Source: www.partizipation.at)

Tools and methods for dialogue

Citizens' Jury

A Citizens' Jury provides an independent setting for members of the public to examine and discuss an important issue of public policy and to deliver a 'verdict' on the issue. It is deliberative in that the Jury gets information about the issues it is set to discuss. This information includes a variety of opinions on what could be done about the issue and is presented by 'witnesses' and is followed by question and answer sessions. Juries do not necessarily have to work towards agreement, but there is usually a movement towards some sort of shared opinion. In a four-day process, day one is spent bringing jurors up to speed on the issue; days two and three concentrate on witness presentations on the different ways of dealing with the issue; and most of the fourth day is spent by the Jury developing its recommendations.

Citizens Juries are often used around current, often controversial, public policy issues where opinion is sharply divided and policy makers cannot decide what to do. The jury creates an informed public opinion about what they feel policy makers should do. Although originally designed for local communities to tackle issues of local concern, Juries are now starting to be used to look at national issues.

PARTNERSHIP

A partnership implies shared responsibilities in each step of the political decision-making process from agenda setting, drafting, decision and implementation of policy initiatives. It is the highest form of participation.

At this level NGOs and the public authorities come together for a close cooperation while ensuring that the NGOs continue to be independent and have the right to campaign and act irrespective of a partnership situation. Partnership can include activities such as delegation of a specific task to an NGO, for example delivery of services, as well as participatory forums and the establishment of co-decision-making bodies, including for resource allocation. Partnership may take place at all steps of the political decision-making process and is particularly relevant at the agenda setting or implementation steps.

Montenegro:

For the sake of establishing partner relations between the Government of Montenegro and NGOs in Montenegro, as well as the improvement of institutional framework for the cooperation between the Government and NGOs, in compliance with the Strategy of Cooperation between the Government of Montenegro and NGOs, the Government of Montenegro, in April 2010, adopted the **Decision on Establishing the Council for Cooperation between the Government of Montenegro and NGOs** (»Official Gazette of Montenegro«, 28/10). The Council for Cooperation between the Government of Montenegro and NGOs is an institutional mechanism, envisaged by the Strategy, whose task is to monitor the implementation of the Strategy and the results of activities defined by the action plan. The Council is composed of 12 representatives of both Government of Montenegro and civil sector, while the President of the Council is a Government representative. Members of the Council from the civil sector are appointed by NGOs whose scope of work is defined by the Decision, while Government representatives are nominated upon the proposal of line ministries. Besides monitoring implementation of the Strategy for the Cooperation between the Government of Montenegro and NGOs, the Council initiates adoption of new and amendments of valid regulations with the aim to create better normative and institutional framework for the work of NGOs, and it encourages cooperation of the Government and public administration bodies with NGOs in the country and abroad, considers periodical and annual reports of public administration bodies on the cooperation with NGOs in certain areas and on allocated funds for NGO project and it report the Government on the level of achieved cooperation.

Croatia: The Green phone service

The Green Phone Service is an established instrument for data collection, environmental analysis, citizen's information and participation and political activism. It provides a tool for quick and effective public participation in identifying and solving environmental problems. The functioning principle of the Green Phone Network (GPN) is that citizens can report environmental problems on unique number to the closest local CSO member of the GPN, which will then try to solve it using different channels and methods, mostly in co-operation with local authority departments and services, and the media. (Source: <http://www.zeleni-telefon.org/bin/view/Zelenitelefon/En/WebHome>)

Slovenia: Campaign "What's the matter, girl?"

The year from March 1999 to March 2000 was the year of European campaign against violence against women. For this occasion a joint action of NGOs, the Government and the Parliament was carried out. The action with the aim to draw public's attention to different types of violence was titled "What's the matter, girl?" The Preparatory Committee which prepared and carried out the whole action was composed of all partner organisations. Financial resources were mostly covered by the state (different offices and bodies), municipalities and business sector. The European Commission and other sponsors also contributed. Office for equal opportunities was coordinating the action. All partners worked together, they shared objectives, they all took initiatives, etc. The response of the municipalities was also very positive. (Source: Active Citizenship Network's Good Practice Database)

Germany: Citizens live their community – Weyarn’s way to sustainability

Weyarn is a community 30 km south of Munich; it was facing problems typical of the outskirts of urban areas – loss of infrastructure, residential influx and increasing volumes of traffic. This led both to a loss of self-esteem and to blindness for the community’s strengths, values and potential. Weyarn’s cultural identity was jeopardized. And the politicians decided to plan the future together with the citizens.

The participative process began with the first “citizens’ workshops”, run by facilitators in 1993. Next came study groups which gradually got to grips with a variety of issues in all areas of local politics. On the basis of stocktaking in these areas a statement of principle was worked out. The study groups produced good results largely because the local council made concomitant professional planning facilities available. An elected steering committee coordinated the planning results from the individual study groups. A council administrator was responsible for a constant flow of information among all those involved, monitored the various projects, took care of public relations and was permanently on hand to ensure continuity. They used various different methods: Advocacy planning, Activating opinion survey, Citizen panel, Internet forum, Cooperative discourse, Round Table, Workshop, Future workshop. The local council provides an annual budget of 25,000 Euro. (Source: www.partizipation.at)

Austria: Strategic environmental assessment (SEA) of the Vienna waste management plan

The goal was to produce a Vienna Waste Management Plan, taking environmental aspects into account and with the relevant lobbies participating.

Preparation

In the preparatory phase the organizational and financial framework for the SEA was set up, the goal of the process defined and the SEA team brought together. The SEA for the Vienna Waste Management Plan was a team process which the city administration, environmental organizations and external experts collaborated on. All those taking part had an equal say in producing the Vienna Waste Management Plan.

Producing the Waste Management Plan

The SEA team’s first job was to define the aims of the Vienna Waste Management Plan; these included environmental aims such as reducing emissions. Next the current situation was surveyed and the unsolved problems in Vienna’s waste management were discussed. Then the participants worked out possible ways of achieving the aims initially defined. The alternatives considered ranged from new waste treatment facilities to waste prevention measures; they were assessed in terms of their impact on the environment, the economy and society. After several rounds of fine-tuning proposals, the SEA team reached a broad consensus about the best package (in the team’s view) for Vienna’s waste management. The result, the Vienna Waste Management Plan, was incorporated in the city’s report on the environment and recommended to the city council for adoption. While the Plan’s recommendations were not legally binding, the SEA team identified very strongly with its content.

Adoption

The city council adopted the Vienna Waste Management Plan by a clear majority. The relevant decision-makers have welcomed the plan’s recommendations and set about implementing them.

Implementation

After adoption, the SEA’s results were incorporated in the statutory waste management concept for Vienna. As soon as the SEA had been completed, work began on implementing the initial recommendations (setting up a strategic planning group on waste prevention, search for suitable sites for new waste treatment facilities). Later an environmental audit was performed for the new incineration plant. The fact that an SEA had been carried out made this audit much more straightforward. The approval procedure for the new biogas plant has been completed successfully. A special monitoring group is supervising the implementation of the results and monitoring the actual effects of the waste management concept on the environment. (Source: www.partizipation.at)

Tools and methods for partnership

Local partnership

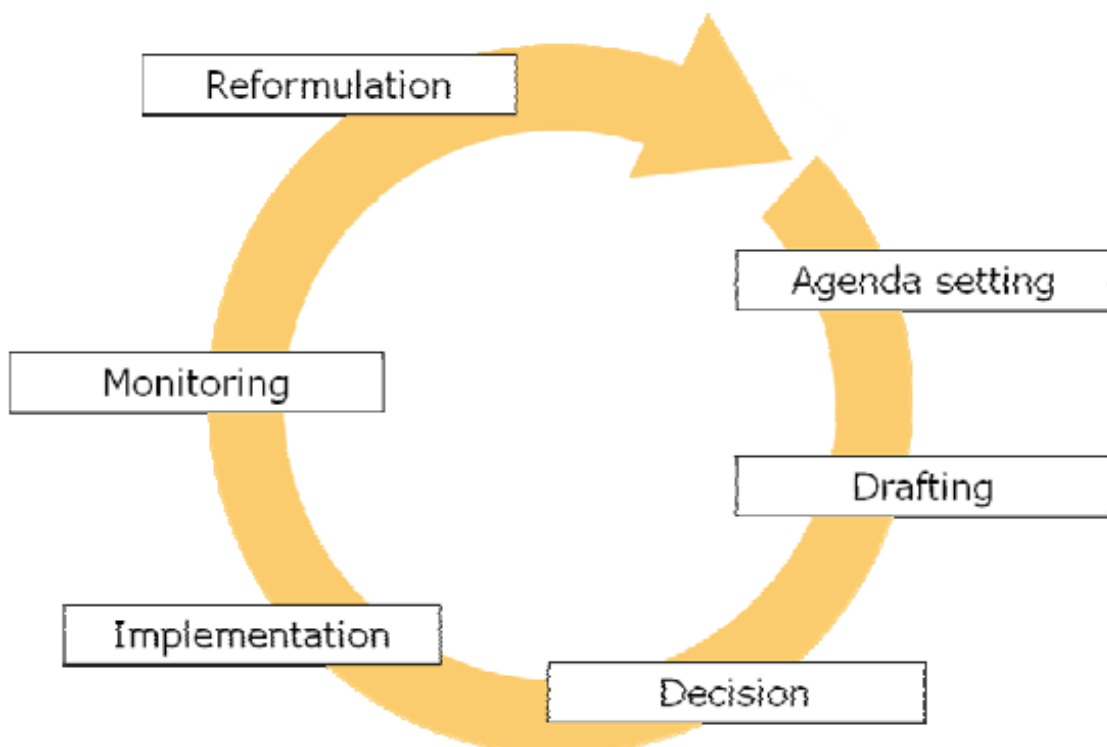
Local partnership is a structure that brings together all relevant actors (social partners, entrepreneurs, NGOs, the education and scientific sector, representatives of the civil society, local government) to work together and improve a given situation in a local community. It is a mechanism of participation of different groups which enables them to discuss different aspects of the problems at the same time on an equal basis. It is a way of community working together on the some issue, but with direct participation and not through delegate system. Consequently, they have better ownership of the conclusions. A defining feature of partnerships is also that all partners share risks and benefits. On the other hand, LP is not totally informal either, because it is formalised with an agreement between all interested parties. Partners have to agree on objectives, goals, structure, timeline, external links and communication, etc. Partners at the beginning of the partnership create a partnership program with all these elements. The program serves as a roadmap for all partners.

Planning for real

Planning for Real events are famous for involving eye-catching three-dimensional models- though these are only a part of the whole process. Participants make a 3D model of their local area and add suggestions of the way they would like to see their community develop. They then prioritise these in groups and create an action plan for decision-makers to take away. Community members are involved from the beginning in deciding on a suitable venue and subject for the process. The model of a neighbourhood is often made by local people themselves in order to create a sense of ownership over the process. A number of events are run depending on the number and nature of the participants. Sometimes separate events are run for specific groups, such as young people. People go on to use their knowledge of living in the area to make suggestions by placing cards directly onto the model. There are both ready-made cards with common suggestions (around 300) and blank cards for participants to fill in themselves. These suggestions are then prioritised in small groups on a scale of Now, Soon, or Later. These resulting priority lists form the basis for an Action Plan that decision-makers are charged with taking away, considering and implementing. Delivering the Action Plan is easier if the community is involved in delivery, monitoring and evaluation.

6. How to get involved in different STEPS IN DECISION MAKING PROCESS?

The cycle below defines the six different steps of the political decision-making process agenda setting, drafting of policy, decision-making, implementation of policy, monitoring and reformulation of policy. Each step offers opportunities for NGOs and public authorities to interact.



AGENDA SETTING

The political agenda is agreed by the parliament and government but can be shaped by NGOs, or groups of NGOs, through campaigns and lobbying for issues, needs and concerns. New policy initiatives are often the result of influence of the campaigns of NGOs. During this step NGOs aim to influence decision-makers on behalf of a collective interest and act in a way that is complementary to political debate.

Slovenia: Putting Law on Voluntarism on the agenda

Agenda setting, drafting, decision

After several years of NGO pressure Ministry of Public Administration finally started to draft the Act on Volunteering. Working group with the representatives of different ministries and two NGO representatives started to draft the act in February 2010 taking the draft, which was prepared by the NGOs in 2004, as a basis for the further drafting of the act. The act sets basic principles and definitions of volunteer work and voluntary organisations, rights and obligations of volunteers and voluntary organisations (e.g. reimbursement of costs, accident insurance for potentially dangerous work). The act also provisions different support measures for voluntary organisations (reservation of resources on public tenders, enables volunteer work as an in-kind co-financing contribution to projects, etc.). The act was finalised in 2010 and passed by the parliament in February 2011. NGOs lobbied for 6 years to put the law on the agenda and at the end succeeded to include all regulations that were foreseen beforehand by NGOs in the law. (Source: CNVOS)

Tools and methods for agenda setting

Open space

Open Space events have a central theme, around which participants identify issues for which they are willing to take responsibility for running a session. At the same time, these topics are distributed among available rooms and timeslots. When no more discussion topics are suggested the participants sign up for the ones they wish to take part in. Open Space creates very fluid and dynamic conversations held together by mutual enthusiasm for interest in a topic. A trained moderator can be useful, especially when people are used to more structured meeting methods. The fundamental principles of Open Space are:

- Whoever comes are the right people (the best participants are those who feel passionately about the issue and have freely chosen to get involved);
- Whenever it starts is the right time (Open Space encourages creativity both during and between formal sessions);
- When it's over it's over (getting the work done is more important than adhering to rigid schedules);
- Whatever happens is the only thing that could happen (let go of your expectations and pay full attention to what is happening here and now).

There is also one »Law« - The »Law of two feet«: If participants find themselves in a situation where they are not learning or contributing they have a responsibility to go to another session, or take a break for personal reflection. It is vital that there are good written reports from all discussions, complete with action points, available at the end of each day. Feedback and implementation structures are important to carry the suggestions forward after the event itself.

Deliberative polling

A deliberative poll measures what the public would think about an issue if they had an adequate chance to reflect on the questions at hand. Deliberative polling observes the evolution of the views of a citizen test group as they learn more about a topic and is more statistically representative than many other approaches due to its large scale. The participating sample is first polled on the targeted issues. After this baseline poll, members of the sample are invited to gather for a few days to discuss the issues. Balanced briefing materials are sent to the participants and made publicly available. The

participants engage in dialogue with competing experts based on questions that the participants themselves develop in small group discussions with trained moderators. After this deliberation, the sample is asked the original questions again. The resulting changes in opinion are thought to represent the conclusions the public would reach if people had the opportunity to become more informed about the issues. Deliberative Polling creates dramatic, statistically significant changes in views. Follow up studies, however, tend to show that some of these changes are reversed over time.

DRAFTING

Public authorities usually have well-established processes for policy drafting. Here NGOs are often involved in areas such as identifying problems, proposing solutions and providing evidence for their preferred proposal with, for example, interviews or research. Facilitating opportunities for consultation should be a key element in this step as well as various forms of dialogue to collect input from key stakeholders.

United Kingdom: Planning for real in Leicester

The Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation was appointed by Voluntary Action Leicester to undertake a Planning for Real (TM) consultation exercise on the St. Matthew's Estate in Leicester. The findings from the consultation were used to feed into the development of the Neighbourhood Management Delivery Plan, and were built upon a highly successful piece of work that was undertaken by St. Matthews Area Forum and local residents in conjunction with Michael Bell Associates - Building on our Success in 2003.

Staff from Voluntary Action Leicester and the Contact Project worked with 60 children, from years 4 and 6, at Taylor Road School to produce the 3D model. 544 residents attended the 18 consultation sessions and a total of 2,546 cards were placed highlighting improvements that could be made to the St. Matthew's Estate and concerns that residents have about the area in general. The population of St Matthews is extremely diverse with the largest ethnic groups being Black African, Asian and White British. The estate has large numbers of new arrivals and is home to Somalian, West Indian, Portuguese, Russian, Monserrattion, Zimbabwean, Kurdish and Irish residents amongst others. Although, the estate clearly faces some significant challenges many of those consulted indicated that they felt some pride in the estate and that it had improved substantially in recent years. Consultation sessions were promoted through distribution of coloured flyers and posters plus announcements on BBC Radio Leicester. (Source: www.peopleandparticipation.net)

Tools and methods for drafting

Planning cell

The Planning Cell method engages approximately twenty-five randomly selected people, who work as public consultants for a limited period of time (e.g. one week), in order to present solutions for a given planning or policy problem. The cell is accompanied by two moderators, who are responsible for the information schedule and the moderation of the plenary sessions. Experts, stakeholders and interest groups have the opportunity to present their positions to members. The final results of the cells' work are summarised as a 'citizen report', which is delivered to the authorities as well as to the participants themselves.

DECISION

The forms of political decision-taking vary based on national context and legislation. Common characteristics are the establishment of a government policy directive by a ministry; or legislation, such as passing a law by parliamentary vote; or public referendum, which then requires enabling legislation. Draft laws and motions should be open to input and participation of NGOs. The public authorities should evaluate different views and opinions before the decision is taken. At this step consultation is central to informed decision. However the final

power of choice lies with the public authorities, unless the decision is taken by a public vote, referendum or a co-decision mechanism.

Tools and methods for decision

For public to present its' views on the draft legislation the Parliament can organise public hearings or public presentations of opinions. Furthermore, each parliamentary working body can appoint a liaison officer for civil society with a responsibility to inform the interested public about the drafts being considered by the working body, to collect opinions and amendments of the public and to present them at the working body's session.

IMPLEMENTATION

This is the step at which many NGOs are most active, for example in service delivery and project execution. Much of the work done by NGOs in the previous steps includes attempts to influence the implementation of policy. This phase is especially important to ensure that the intended outcome will be fulfilled. Access to clear and transparent information on expectations and opportunities is important at this step, as well as active partnerships.

Slovenia: Public Involvement in the Decision Making about Low and Medium Level Radioactive Waste Disposal (implementation)

REC - Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe accepted the invitation of the Agency for Radioactive Waste Management to implement a project aimed at informing local communities and other environmental NGOs on how to participate in the decision-making process concerning the location of a radioactive waste disposal site.

The Agency for RadWaste Management had to find appropriate location within Slovenia for the RadWaste disposal until 2008 and had invited all Slovenian municipalities to propose the location for disposal and offered them a financial compensation for previously mentioned negative impacts. 8 municipalities accepted further discussions, but local population was not informed well about their rights and about disposal characteristics, and therefore afraid to live near the disposal. REC was invited by the Agency to implement the project which would help people to find information and be involved in the decision making process.

The project, which included organisation of several workshops and roundtables (in Parliament and locally), was aimed at involving the public in the decision making process, preparing recommendations for public involvement in the decision making and informing the public about their legal rights to participate in environmental decision making (through discussion with an independent legal expert and Agency for RadWaste Management. (Source: Active Citizenship Network's Good Practice Database, http://activecitizenship.net/cgi-bin/db_acn/db.cgi)

MONITORING

At this point the role of NGOs is to monitor and assess the outcomes of the implemented policy. It is important to have in place an effective and transparent monitoring system that ensures the policy/programme achieves the intended purpose.

REFORMULATION

The knowledge gained from assessing the policy implementation, coupled with evolving needs in society, often require a reformulation of policy. This must be based on access to information and opportunities for dialogue to identify needs and initiatives. This reformulation allows for the initiation of a new cycle of decision-making

Serbia: Changes in the Criminal Code with regard to domestic violence

Reformulation

In 2002, first changes in the Criminal Code with regard to domestic violence happened due to the lobbying of both women Law professors and women's CSOs dealing with the issue. Improvement of this law is remarkable, because from 2002 until today Serbia has one of the best laws in the region about domestic violence, elaborated as separate articles both in the Criminal Code and the Law on Family Relations, with still modest but existing number of perpetrators who are imprisoned under this law chapters. (Source: Civic Initiatives, Balkan Civil Society Development Network)

Slovenia: Revision of Youth Councils law

Reformulation

The Slovenian Youth Council (NGO) promoted a process to revise a law on Youth by drafting its own proposed law, conducting public debates and consultations with other NGOs, as well as advocating it in different circles (Slovenian Office for Youth, National Assembly, Ministry for Education and Sports, etc.), until the new law was approved by the National Parliament. In the year 2004 Slovenian Office for Youth started preparing the novel of the youth law in strong cooperation with civil society. In 2004 the Office and youth organizations had an annual consultation to analyse the existing law and prepared proposals of changes. After that the Office looked through all the proposals and prepared a proposal of the novel, which was then sent to Slovenian Youth Council. The Youth Council established a special working group, which is working on the novel. In the September 2005 the Office and the Youth Council prepared a final proposal of the novel in partnership - although the draft was written mostly by the Slovenian Youth council, they worked closely with the Office for Youth and parliament. (Source: Active Citizenship Network's Good Practice Database, http://activecitizenship.net/cgi-bin/db_acn/db.cgi)

Macedonia - NGO EKO SVEST

Implementation, Monitoring and Reformulation of policy

NGO was asked by the government and local authorities to raise awareness about recycling on local level among families. As they were also involved in monitoring the situation in the neighbourhoods, they found out the government forgot to put out enough bins – which lead to reformulation of the implementation of policy. (Source: Council of Europe – the case was presented within the consultation process of drafting of the Code)

Italy: Health services evaluation

7. Mechanisms for systematic support to the process of public participation in the decision-making

7.1 FRAMEWORK DOCUMENTS on cooperation between NGOs and public authorities

In many European countries framework agreements have been developed to outline undertakings, roles, responsibilities and procedures with the main aim to improve the cooperation between public authorities and NGOs. These documents lay out a clear basis for the relationship and thereby facilitate ongoing dialogue and mutual understanding between NGOs and public authorities. They include bilateral agreements with parliament or government, strategy documents for cooperation and official programmes for cooperation, adopted by the public authorities.

Montenegro: Strategy of the Cooperation between the Government of Montenegro and NGOs and Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy of the Cooperation between the Government of Montenegro and NGOs for the period 2009-2011

With the aim to develop Strategy of the Cooperation between the Government of Montenegro and NGOs, the Government formed Inter-sector working group composed of representatives of the ministries and NGOs. Inter-sector working group worked from June 2007 to December 2008. Within the period 23 June – 23 July 2008, both draft documents – Strategy and its Action plan were available at the website of the Government of Montenegro and Centre for Development of Non-Governmental Organizations (CRNVO) to all stakeholders: NGOs, public administration bodies, citizens, professional and non-professional public invited to provide suggestions, opinions and proposals. With the aim to reconsider offered solutions through direct communication following the presentation to the wide range of stakeholders and prior to defining Draft documents, Office for Cooperation with NGOs together with the OSCE Mission in Montenegro, on 1 October, organized round table entitled: “Strengthening Cooperation between the Government of Montenegro and NGOs”, at which draft documents were presented: “Strategy of the Cooperation between the Government of Montenegro and NGOs” and the “Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy of the Cooperation between the Government of Montenegro and NGOs”, as well as the summary of comments, recommendations and proposals submitted in the period June - July. Government of Montenegro, on 22 January 2009, adopted **the Strategy of Cooperation between the Government of Montenegro and NGOs**, which defined principles and ways of cooperation, the manner of mutual informing, establishment of partner relations, as well as mechanisms of mutual monitoring of implementation of this document. Related to the implementation of this document, as the element of the Strategy, Action plan for its implementation was adopted for the period 2009 – 2011 defining deadlines for the implementation of activities, actors and indicators of their implementation.

United Kingdom: Compacts

In 1996 the independent Deakin Commission Report on the ‘Future of the Voluntary Sector’ called for a formal agreement between the government and the voluntary sector’. Following this, in July 1997, a conference of the leading NGO umbrella organizations backed the proposal for such an agreement. Participants at the conference established the Compact Working Group to bring together views of NGOs from all parts of the UK third sector. In October and November 1998, after several months’ consultations with government, four National Compacts were signed with the governments of England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland – the first such documents ever signed. Among the four national compacts, the Welsh Compact is the only one that is legally binding, although there is evidence that public law precedent recognises the duties and recommendations of the Compact. The National Compacts were followed by **local agreements** signed between the voluntary sector at the local level and local councils or other public bodies. In the English Compact, specific implementation articles provide for the preparation of **Codes of Practice** on consultation; funding and procurement; volunteering; community groups; and black and minority ethnic groups. There is an annual review of implementation of the Compact, including participation of NGO representatives, which examines the level of Compact awareness in government, and develops an outline of progress to be achieved during the following year. (Source: CNVOS, NCVO)

Estonia: Civil Society Development Concept (EKAK)

The Estonian Civil Society Development Concept is a document that was developed by the Network of Estonian Non-profit Organizations (NENO). In December 2002, the Estonian parliament, Riigikogu, adopted the Concept as a basis for co-operation with the Third sector. The Concept defines the mutually complementary roles of the public authorities and civic initiative, as well as the principles of their co-operation in shaping and implementing public policies and developing the civil society in Estonia. EKAK sets out the main obligations and rights in the co-operation between the public sector and non-profit sector which are related to the acknowledgement and representation of sides, their partnership, development of policies, use of resources and reporting. (Source: CNVOS, NENO)

Sweden: Agreement on cooperation between the social voluntary sector and the Swedish government

The Swedish agreement includes a common vision statement recognising the importance of the voluntary sector, it’s right to be independent and to be a voice for specific groups and acknowledging the specificities of the sector. Both parties agree on the principles of independence, dialogue, quality, continuity, transparency and diversity. Based on the principles each party defines accountabilities and actions; such as open information sharing, inclusive consultation processes etc. The agreement will be followed by local agreements and implementation and follow-up mechanisms. (Source: CNVOS, Forum for Voluntary Social Work Sweden)

Slovenia: Partnership for the environment

Before the new Millennium environmental NGOs and Ministry of Environment drafted joint program Partnership for the Environment, which defined measures for freedom of information, development of environmental NGOs and public participation. The program contained concrete measures and responsible persons for their implementation. Although it was drafted throughout long and participative process the program was never fully implemented. (Source: CNVOS, http://www.mop.gov.si/fileadmin/mop.gov.si/pageuploads/nevladne_organizacije/partnerstvo.pdf)

7.2 STRUCTURES for cooperation between NGOs and public authorities

In order to facilitate the relationship between public authorities and NGOs a number of countries have developed coordinating bodies. These include: government bodies such as a contact person for civil society in each ministry or a central coordination body as a single interlocutor; joint structures such as multi-stakeholder committees, work groups, expert councils and other advisory bodies (permanent or ad-hoc); or NGO alliances/coalitions which pool resources and develop joint positions.

The functions of the offices differ. In general they are responsible for: drafting and managing process of consultation concerning laws that affect the sector; contributing towards policy development on funding for the sector; distribution of government funding or providing support to bodies which distribute government funding; coordinating different ministries who are responsible for nurturing cooperation with the sector; training and education of civil servants concerning government policies towards the sector and their implementation; encouraging civic participation, open governance, and social dialogue; promoting the activities of the sector, philanthropy and promoting partnerships on regional and local level.²

The selected cases show various structures of cooperation between NGOs and public authorities – either in form of special governmental offices for cooperation or within joint bodies, which include NGO representatives. As open, transparent and independent selection of these representatives should be assured, further good practices of various selection procedures are presented.

Montenegro: Office for the Cooperation with NGOs

In compliance with the document entitled: “Grounds for the Cooperation between the Government of Montenegro and NGOs” as of 2006 and conclusions of the Government related to the adoption of the document, within General Government Secretariat, as internal organizational unit, in 2007, **Office for the cooperation with NGOs** was established as an institutional mechanism of cooperation with NGOs. Apart from this Office, based on the conclusions, in the ministries and other public administration bodies, focal points were appointed for the cooperation with NGOs, as a specific cooperation mechanism. The task of the Office for the Cooperation with NGOs is to perform affairs related to the development of plans, programmes, projects and other activities in accordance with principles and goals defined in the document “Grounds for the Cooperation” as well as other documents. Special task of the Office has been the coordination of work of public administration bodies in the field of cooperation with NGOs – cooperation with focal points along with proposing adequate education, as well as performing administrative affairs for the Council for the Cooperation between the Government and NGOs.

Montenegro: The Council for Cooperation between the Government of Montenegro and Non-Governmental Organizations

Although mentioned as an example of establishing a partnership between the Government of Montenegro and NGOs in Montenegro, **The Council for Cooperation between the Government of Montenegro and Non-Governmental Organizations** is one of the most important institutional mechanisms for saradnju organa javne vlasti i nevladinih organizacija u Crnoj Gori. The Council was formed in 2010 and its main task is to monitor the implementation of the Strategy and the results of activities defined by the Action plan, then initiation adoption of new and amendments of valid regulations with the aim to create better normative and institutional framework for the work of NGOs. The Council is composed of 12 representatives of both Government of Montenegro and civil sector, while the President of the Council is a Government representative.

United Kingdom: Cabinet Office for Civil Society

The Cabinet Office for Civil Society transformed from the Office for the Third Sector in 2010. The Office of the Third Sector was established in May 2006 under the Cabinet Office (The Cabinet Office is a department of the Government of the United Kingdom responsible for supporting the Prime Minister and the Cabinet of the United Kingdom, which is a governing body composed of the Prime Minister and cabinet members).

² ICNL, 2009, p. 11.

The new office provides support to voluntary and community organisations with the aim to

- make it easier to run a charity, social enterprise or voluntary organisation;
- get more resources into the sector and strengthen its independence and resilience; and
- make it easier for sector organisations to work with the state. (Source: <http://www.icnl.org/knowledge/themes/ngogovcoop/paperpol.pdf>, www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/)

Croatia: Government Office for cooperation with NGOs

The Office, established in 1998, is charged with supervision and implementation of the recently adopted Strategy for Creation of Environment Stimulating for Development of Civil Society, creation and submission of legal solutions for the sector, monitoring of distribution of financial support to NGOs by state bodies, and coordination of activities of national and local bodies regarding cooperation with the sector. The office works in close cooperation with the Council for Civil Society Development, for which it acts as a technical, administrative, expert and financial support structure. (Source: Government of the Republic of Croatia, www.uzuvrh.hr) Similar offices were recently established in Serbia and Montenegro.

Croatia: The Council for the Development of Civil Society

The *Council for the Development of Civil Society* as a governmental advisory body was established in 2002. The Council is composed of 10 representatives from the Ministries and 14 representatives of civil society (elected by the NGOs themselves). The Council focuses its activities on the implementation of the Strategy for the Development of Civil Society and harmonization and oversight of financial support provided from the State budget for financing NGOs programs/projects. The role of the Council is to provide advice to the Government regarding NGO development and policies, as well as to coordinate efforts in realizing goals and action plans developed in the “*National Strategy for Creating Supportive Environment for the Development of Civil Society*.” (Source: ICNL)

France: High Commissary on Active Solidarities Against Poverty

The High Commissary was established in 2009 with a Decree, which stipulates that the High Commissary acts by delegation of the Prime Minister as a government body created to be in charge of the Government policy towards youth and the associative sector. The High Commissary also shares some responsibilities with the Ministry of Health and Sports. By delegation of the Prime Minister, the High Commissary on Youth prepares and implements the Government policy regarding Youth and the development of the associative sector. The High Commissary oversees both solidarity and youth policies, including public policy regarding youth, popular education, and associative life. (Source: ICNL)

Estonia: A parliamentary group for the support of civil society

A *parliamentary group for the support of civil society* includes representatives from all political parties in the Parliament. More than one-third of MPs belong to this group, thus making it the biggest parliamentary grouping in Riigikogu (Estonian Parliament). The group perceives its role to be discussion of the situation and initiation of necessary legislation for support of civil society development. However, they have not made legislative initiatives or statements so far. (Source: ICNL)

Slovenia: Office for Non-Governmental Organisations

The Office within the Ministry of Public Administration of Slovenia is competent to address the horizontal issues of non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The Office is responsible for preparation and enforcement of measures to strengthen the civil dialogue, i.e., to promote the participation of NGOs in the process of preparation and implementation of public policies and to support better policy and regulatory environment for the development of the non-governmental sector. (Source; CNVOS, Ministry of Public Administration)

Slovenia: Liaison officers for NGOs on the ministerial level

Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Interior have appointed one of the Minister’s cabinet’s staff for the liaison officers for communication with NGOs. Liaison officers are responsible for communication, facilitation of the contacts between NGOs and the Ministry and for helping NGOs find responsible persons for their initiatives and proposals. (Source: CNVOS)

Poland: NGOs’ representatives in the work of Steering Committees of the Ministry of Environment

The institutional framework of cooperation between the Ministry and NGOs, elaborated in 1998, allows NGOs to be represented in the working sessions of the so-called Steering Committee - consultative and advisory bodies that operate within the Ministry. Their selection procedure is as follows: a) Ministry of Environment publishes the information on its website, regarding the recruitment of candidates for relevant Committees b) All interested NGOs submit their candidates c) The list of all candidates is placed on the Ministry’s website d) NGOs vote for one candidate from the list, who they

consider as the most appropriate. Since the Steering Committees are participating in each stage of the legislation forming, the above described practice can be defined as dialogue in definition, implementation and evaluation. Participation in Steering Committees is only one of several aspects of the broad cooperation between the Ministry of Environment and NGOs. The cooperation includes public consultations, participation in joined trainings, conferences and seminars as well as financial support for specific projects. Apart from regular meetings of the Steering Committees, activities aimed at strengthening the cooperation between NGOs and the Ministry include elaborating and publishing documents describing the rules and guidelines for mutual dialogue and adjusting the Ministry website to the consultation process. (Source: ACN Good Practice database, http://activecitizenship.net/cgi-bin/db_acn/db.cgi)

Slovenia: Selection procedure of NGO representatives

CNVOS has developed a transparent process of selection of NGO representatives to be included in policy or decision-making bodies. The purpose is to offer all interested individuals and organisations

an unified procedure with clear rules in accordance with principles of openness, equal opportunities and transparency.

Until now, there have been more than 40 selection procedures, including the NGO representative for the European Economic and Social Committee - EESC (with the Government Office for European Affairs); and other bodies that the government has set up for the purpose of including the NGO representatives throughout the policy-making process:

- preparation/drafting: working group for preparation of National action plan on social inclusion (Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs), working group for the preparation of the law on Voluntarism, working group for the preparation of the novel of the Law on Implementation of the Principle of Equal Treatment, etc.
- implementation: Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for implementation of principle of equal treatment (Office for Equal Opportunities);
- and monitoring: Working group for monitoring the execution of National action plan on social inclusion 2004 – 2006 (Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs); Monitoring Committee for the EQUAL initiative (Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs); Supervisory Committee for Operational Programme for development of human resources for the period 2007 – 2013 (The Government Office for Local-Self-government and Regional Policy). (Source: CNVOS)

Bulgaria: Web-based platform for selection of NGO representatives

The Bulgarian environmental organisations have established an online platform for nomination in various bodies and institutions. The so called civil e-representation is an internet-based platform for the selection of NGO representatives to various working groups and committees with institutions dealing with sustainable development and environmental issues. In order to effectively participate in this process, NGOs should register in the manner specified by the platform. The procedure for the selection of NGO representatives has been endorsed at the National Conference of NGOs operating in the field of sustainable development and the environment held in 2002. (Source: BCSDN)

7.3 E-participation tools

E-participation tools are part of all above described elements of public participation. Since they offer great potential for improving democratic practice and participation of an organised civil society, we will present them more thoroughly.

E-participation tools can largely contribute to the transparency, accountability and responsiveness of institutions, as well as to the promotion of citizens' engagement and to increasing empowerment and the accessibility and inclusiveness of the democratic process.

E-consultation has many potential benefits, including:

- opportunities to reach a wider audience;
- consultation independent of place, and sometimes time;
- offering a range of techniques to meet the diverse technical and communicative skills of the target audience;
- enabling more informed consultation – additional information can be offered by directly providing or linking to relevant online resources, video content and e-publications;
- allowing, where appropriate, online deliberation to take place – by providing opportunities for the target audience to engage with one another, policy-makers are able to see the development of possible solutions for different issues;

- enabling online analysis of contributions, thus enhancing the transparency of the consultation process;
- enabling relevant and appropriate online feedback to citizens in response to their comments.

In order to fully benefit from their potential, e-tools should be integrated by all participants of the decision making, including the authorities at all levels and organised civil society.

eTools include:

- **Websites** with comprehensive access to key documents and announcement of Public events,
- **Single information points** for policy drafting, with information available in different formats to reach the public,
- **Online databases**, which enable easy and open access to relevant, accurate and timely information on policy process, documents and political decision-makers,
- **Web casts** from hearings, meetings and debates allowing people to watch and listen in real time,
- **E-mail alerts** announcing upcoming project and funding opportunities,
- **FAQs** online or other channels to offer information presented as questions and answers, targeted towards providing practical help and guidance.

Some of the best practices were already presented under other chapters. Here we present only best practices that included several different methods of consultations.

Slovenia: Climate Consultations (<http://www.slovenija-co2.si/>)

Slovenian organisations Institute for electronic Participation, Focus Association for Sustainable Development and Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe were winners of public procurement call under Communicating about EU and EU related matters programme. The established On-line platform enabling interactive support to public consultations on climate and energy policy targets of Slovenia until 2020 with facilitated on-line forum, on-line chat room, video broadcast, Facebook etc. They produced 6 consultation reports and 6 policy recommendations for decision makers. Consultations on different climate topics were two-fold: live public debates with web streaming and e-consultations. Experienced gained from other e-participation projects (such as NGO web portal during Slovenia Presidency to the EU Council) show that e-consultations and debates are still more successful if they are joint with live events. (Source: INePA)

United Kingdom: Department for Communities and Local Government's Towns Cities and Regions Webchat

Part of the DCLG's work on Towns, Cities and Regions policy is seeking to raise the economic performance of the UK's cities. To do this the DCLG wanted to find out what the visions of cities and towns are, what assets they already have, what the barriers to growth exist and what government can do to help to remove them. In May 2005, DCLG ministers took part in a series of summits around England in smaller cities and larger towns where they met with local authority leaders and councillors to discuss the economic performance of these cities. However, there were regions that they were unable to visit due to resource and time restrictions. Real-time webchats were held to facilitate dialogue between the Minister for Local Government and the Secretary of State in those areas where live summits were not possible. Two real-time webchats based on blog/instant messaging hybrid (third-party build and hosted on external servers) were organised. The webchats were readable by anyone, but registration was required to contribute and restricted to specific local authority leaders and councillors. (Source: www.peopleandparticipation.net)

United Kingdom: Downing Street e-petitions

Downing Street works in partnership with the non-partisan charitable project mySociety to provide a service to allow citizens, charities and campaign groups to set up petitions that are hosted on the Downing Street website, enabling anyone to address and deliver a petition directly to the Prime Minister. One can start a petition using the e-petition form available on the website. You will be asked to provide some basic information about yourself and your petition. The petition should be live on the website within five working days. They aim to accept as many petitions as possible. However, the

site has to meet standards that are set in our terms and conditions and in the Civil Service Code. Petitioners may freely disagree with the Government or call for changes of policy. There will be no attempt to exclude critical views and decisions to accept or reject will not be made on a party political basis. To sign a petition, you need to give your name, address and email on the form provided. Once you have signed the petition, you will receive an email asking you to confirm that you wish to add your name to the petition by clicking a link. Once you have done this, your name will be added to the petition. (Source: www.peopleandparticipation.net)

7.4 Capacity-building

It is essential to develop the capacity and skills of local, regional and national NGOs so that they may be actively involved in policy formulation, project development and service provision.

Capacity-building activities can include:

- **Expert seminars and meetings** involving experts in the development of specialised research or studies that can be used in the drafting,
- **Capacity building seminars** to increase knowledge and capacity relevant to the implementation,
- **Training seminars** for NGOs and public authorities in specific topics relevant to implementation, such as procurement, project and funding applications.

Capacity-building can also include training seminars to improve the understanding of the reciprocal roles of NGOs and public authorities in this engagement, as well as exchange programmes to facilitate the understanding of each other's realities.

Slovenia: Programme of training for public officials for implementing and assessing consultative processes

In 2010 Ministry of Public Administration started with a series of capacity-building activities for members of public administration, aimed at implementation of consultative processes and awareness-raising about positive impacts of inclusion of public in policy development. The main goal of these trainings is implementation of efficient and lasting civil dialogue and implementation of provisions of the Resolution on normative activity, which provides legal obligation for public officials to consult the public during development of laws and regulations. (Source: Ministry of Public Administration, Slovenia)

Slovenia: Handbook on Planning, Managing and Evaluating Public Participation Processes

In June 2008, the Ministry of Public Administration published a manual, aimed at public officials as help for planning, implementing and assessing processes of involving interested public in development of policies and legislation. It is available in English at: http://www.mju.gov.si/fileadmin/mju.gov.si/pageuploads/Mojca/Brina/Zadnji_angl_LAHEK.pdf.

Slovenia: European social fund for the capacity building of NGOs

With the aim to support and mobilize NGOs to exploit their possibilities to take part in the formation and implementation of public policies, particular funding was introduced within an ESF priority axis of "Institutional and administrative capacity" for the promotion of the development of NGOs, civil and social dialogue. Networks of NGOs were particularly targeted for this funding: existing national networks have been supported and 12 regional NGO centres were established with the aim to offer information service, trainings and counselling to NGOs, as well as to advocate national and local public authorities for introducing new measures for the development of NGOs. (Source: CNVOS)

Montenegro: Trainings of the Centre for Development of Non-Governmental Organizations

Center for Development of Non-Governmental Organizations through the Capacity Building Programme, Programme for Service Delivery and Programme for Inter-sector Cooperation and Reform of Public Authorities, provides permanent support to strengthening capacities of NGOs, as well as to strengthening capacities of state and local servants and

employees. Capacity Building Programme is intended for improvement of knowledge and skills of NGOs from the area of managing projects and organizational management. Owing to this Programme, numerous NGOs underwent trainings and seminars and participated at workshops and round tables, organized by CRNVO. CRNVO team has been composed of 16 trainers. Trainings and consultations provided by the trainers cover various areas: writing project proposals for EU funds, managing projects financed by EU funds, strategic planning, public representation, strengthening civil participation in decision making, etc. In addition to this, within the Programme for Inter-sector Cooperation and Reform of Public Authorities and Programme for Service Delivery, CRNVO conducts a range of trainings and seminars for state and local servants and employees. So far, around 3000 NGO representatives, local self- government officials and government officials underwent seminars and trainings organized by CRNVO.

New Zealand: web page for building capability of public officials

New Zealand's Government created special web page <http://www.goodpracticeparticipate.govt.nz> dedicated to building capacities of public officials for public participation. The web page offers advice and information on how to plan, implement and evaluate the public participation process, what are the benefits of public participation, which methods to use, how to work with specific groups, etc. In Europe similar web pages are often managed by NGOs (e.g. www.participation.at).

8. Participation in decision-making on local level

On the local level, the dialogue between CSOs and the local government also rests on rules for engagement with CSOs (**Laws on Local Self-government** usually contain provisions for CSO and citizens' engagement) as well as special agreements and structures for cooperation. If direct democracy as a very old concept, participative democracy on the other hand is a concept that is still developing. The level of participative democracy on the local level depends on the general level of participative democracy in the specific country, size of the community, specific problems each community deals with (e. g. environmental, social, etc.).

In general public participation on the local level follows the same principles as public participation on the local level, depending on the size of the community and the organisation of the regional and local self-government. Therefore we will only list some examples of support measures on the local level and some examples of public participation in solving of concrete issues on the local level (other examples can be also found above under different mechanisms).

8.1 Support measures on the local level

Similarly as on the national level it is also important to develop different support mechanisms for the development of NGOs and for cooperation between NGOs and municipalities on the local level.

Slovenia: Commission for the development of NGOs in Maribor

Commission is a consultative body of the mayor. Its core activities include creation of initiatives for development of NGO sector in Maribor, provision of comments in decision-making process, informing of general public about NGO sector, etc. The Commission is composed of four representatives of Maribor municipality, four NGO representatives and one representative from the regional NGO support organization. (Source: www.mojadruzba.si)

Slovenia, United Kingdom: local compacts

Similarly as in UK (see above), three local compacts were already signed in Slovenia. Local compacts are promoted by the initiative *Moja družba* (My society), initiative of the CNVOS and 12 regional NGO infrastructural organizations. NGOs in Zagorje, Trbovlje and Hrastnik succeeded to present positive outcomes of such compact, an agreement that defines

principles of cooperation between the municipality and NGOs, obligations of the municipality (e.g. multiyear financing of NGOs on the basis of clear and transparent criteria, open and inclusive decision-making, inclusion of NGOs in public service provision, etc.) and obligations of NGOs (high standards of accountable and transparent governance, inclusion of beneficiaries and other stakeholders in development and provision of services, etc.). (Source: CNVOS, MREST, <http://www.skladdela-zasavje.si/>, www.mojadruzba.si)

France: The Council of borders

The French Council of Borders is an elected public establishment, including individuals from municipalities, representatives of NGOs from a wide array of sectors, such as institutions for elderly people, families, disabled...). The decisions on policies, relevant to the municipality, are taken on the basis of one person-one vote. One of the major issues that the council deals with is planning of the budget, allowing it to provide means to the policy areas and institutions that are in need. Since the council consists of individuals, directly involved in specific policy fields, hence knowing the situation and conditions therein, and a lot of things can be discussed and settled at the municipality level. What is interesting and almost unique is that the NGOs are inside the communal system, they are institutionalized and work in complementarity with the public sector. It can be claimed that the NGOs play an active role in the decision-making processes, as they have the institutional setting for analysing the needs of the municipality, identifying the actors involved and maintain a database of good practices of cooperation between municipalities and NGOs. (Source: ELISAN - European Local Inclusion and Social Action Network, France, www.elisan.eu)

Croatia: Regional foundations for the development of civil society

The National Foundation is the leading public institutions for the cooperation, linking and financing of civil society organisations in Croatia. Through the program *Our contribution to the community* and the partnership with 4 regional foundations (Split, Zagreb, Osijek, Pula) the national foundation decentralised its' financial resources. Local NGOs and civic initiatives can now access those resources twice a year at the foundation that is responsible for their area. (Source: <http://zaklada.civilnodrustvo.hr/category/105/subcategory/153/1497>)

8.2 Public participation in solving of concrete problems of the local community

A part from the support mechanisms for the cooperation between the municipality and NGOs (or general public), there have been different mechanisms and practices of public participation in solving of different local issues developed.

Czech Republic: Involvement of citizens into decision making on communal level

Agora Central Europe, a Czech non-profit organisation founded in 1998 with the aim of helping to enhance communication between local governments, central government bodies and citizens, conducted a participatory project - involvement of citizens into decision making on communal level in the city of Klasterec nad Ohri. The project was based on Agora CE Seven steps model - preparing the project, setting the rules, motivating and involving citizens, choosing priorities - a first public meeting, drafting plans and preparing activities, decision making and implementation of action plans. First, the problems identified by citizens were ranked in order of their urgency, and working groups were set up to tackle the five most serious problems. Each working group held several sessions, attended by town hall employees. The groups also sometimes asked further experts to attend the sessions and provide their standpoints. The outcome of the work of all groups, the so-called action plans, were (after being reaffirmed by the public) introduced to the local government - which acknowledged all action plans and, at the same time, ordered the Commission for the Municipal Development Strategy to include these solutions in the strategy, which was later adopted by the local government in 2000. The project proved started the series of successful projects of Agora CE in the whole country. (Source: CEECN Best practice database: www.ceecn.net/best.html)

Serbia: Direct Participation of Citizens in Decision Making in Sremski Karlovci

Civil participation in decision making is operating through the Council for Development, formed in Sremski Karlovci in late 2008, in the scope of the project "Support to Strengthening Civil Participation in Serbia", jointly implemented by local authorities, Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities and a Swiss donor. The Council brings together citizens and representatives of local authorities. Through their participation in the work of the Council for Development, citizens of Sremski Karlovci had a task to choose a topic they believe to be the most important for their local community.

Inhabitants of Karlovci chose tourism. By participating in the Council, citizens have the opportunity to get concretely engaged in activities and plans for promotion of tourism in their community. A pilot project for establishment of civil participation in decision making is being implemented in three urban and three rural municipalities in Serbia. Besides Sremski Karlovci, the Municipality of Čoka from Vojvodina is also included in the project. (Source: Civic Initiatives, Balkan Civil Society Development Network)

Romania: TeleCottage – the heart of the community

Telecottage is usually a community based facility that is there to assist learning, access to technology, access to work etc. for its local community. The Telecottages movement started in Sweden and the idea has been taken up quite widely. In 2000 20 pilot rural development centers called Telecottages were established as local resource centres that can offer services in the following fields: infrastructure, human resources, economy, tourism, community development, cross-border cooperation, culture, civil sector, and environment. The establishment was planned in the participative manner they run a participative planning processes in collaboration with the local public administration using 5 phases: elaboration of the vision, identification of the opportunities and definition of the problems, Setting up the objectives, analysing the force field and context, elaboration of the action plan. They also established a Telecottages network. (Source: ACN Good Practice database, http://activecitizenship.net/cgi-bin/db_acn/db.cgi)

Slovenia: local partnerships in the scope of site selection for low and intermediate level radioactive waste (LILRW)

The first local partnerships in Slovenia were established in 2006 under the landfill site selection for low and intermediate level radioactive waste in the municipality Brežice, Krško and Sevnica. LPs in Brežice and Krško were active throughout site selection procedure. Through different committees local stakeholders (associations and other organizations, businesses, civil initiatives, individuals) together with investors and municipalities discussed different issues of the disposal (influences on health and environment, local development (how to compensate negative consequences of the new object), technology and planning of the object, safety issues, management of the object, etc. LP Dol pri Ljubljana is still actively involved in the management of the Central repository for radioactive waste. (Source: Agency for Radioactive waste, www.arao.si)

United Kingdom: Partnership working in Croydon

Croydon has a strong tradition of partnership between sectors. The voluntary and community sector (VCS) has equal representation on the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) which is also reflected in the thematic sub-groups underpinning it. The local infrastructure agency, Croydon Voluntary Action (CVA), facilitates a comprehensive Community Network with links to a wide range of groups representing different parts of the community. CVA and the council have worked together to develop community engagement mechanisms, capacity building support and a co-ordinated VCS commissioning framework. The Community Network is linked to a wide range of networks and forums representing specific sub-sectors or groups within the community (eg. children and young people's network, older people's network, mental health forum, faith forum, refugee forum). These sub-networks are funded from different sources and to different degrees but they too feed into the LSP and relevant thematic partnerships. (Source: NCVO, http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/uploadedFiles/NCVO/What_we_do/Sustainable_Funding/Public_Service_Delivery/PSDN_case_study_croydon%20high%20res.pdf)

9. Effective NGO participation in the decision-making process

For the purpose of joint interest enforcement and exchange of information, experience and expertise, NGOs usually cooperate in networks or coalitions, which are essential for building NGO influence in the dialogue with institutions, access to key actors and putting issues on their agenda.

Enforcement of common interests can be achieved by networking through joint and concerted actions, joint formulation of opinions and proposals, lobbying, campaigning, research and awareness-raising and the use of tools, such as policy papers, position documents, letters, manifestos, posters and leaflets, websites, media releases...

NGO Coalitions are more effective than a struggle of an individual NGO in all level of decision-making process and in all their activities, being awareness-raising campaigns or advocacy.

Slovenia: Act now! Campaign

In 2008 and 2009 four environmental NGOs carried out a quite successful campaign Act now!, the purpose of which is to create a pressure on the prime minister of Slovenia to act for an ambitious and fair global climate deal, guarantee immediate transition of Slovenia to a low carbon path and to personally take part in the Copenhagen climate talks. With 7 support NGOs, more than 10 000 signature and two visibility/media actions the campaign was successful in triggering a parliamentary declaration on climate deal and stimulating the prime minister to go to Copenhagen. (Source: www.ukrepajzdaj.org)

European Union: Human ring – end poverty

In November 2010 *The 2010 Coalition of Social NGOs* (coalition of more than 40 EU NGOs) organised a solidarity gathering to urge European institutions and Members States' governments to give a more sustainable and equitable response to the crisis, instead of making the most vulnerable vary the cost. The 2010 Coalition of Social NGOs and the women, men and children, taking part in or supporting this event, have called on decision-makers to put solidarity at the heart of their response to the crisis. By initiating the Human Ring around the European Parliament, the 2010 Coalition of Social NGOs calls for action on 8 key points: accessible services for all, an end to homelessness, participation in policy making, fundamental rights at the heart of the European policies, equality between men and women and an end to all discrimination, redistribution of wealth to create more equal societies, adequate income and high levels of social protection and decent work to create a sustainable way out of poverty. (Source: www.endpoverty.eu)

Slovenia: NGO Coalition for Plan C

After parliamentary elections in 2008 and consequent changes in the Government NGOs once again started to discuss their needs, expectations from the Government and measures that should be taken for the development of NGO sector. Through couple of consultation meetings led by CNVOS they created a *Call to the future prime minister and coalition of political parties* with a proposal on how to include development of the NGO sector in the coalition agreement. The call was accompanied by the set of necessary conditions that should be fulfilled for further NGO development and **Plan C – initiative for stable and permanent civil dialogue**, which included a set of administrative measures that could be implemented rather quickly, but would nevertheless extremely contributed to the level of civil dialogue (establishment of the Office for NGOs, passing of the Code of good practice of public participation, appointment of liaison officers in the ministries, etc.). The initiative was signed by more than 100 NGOs in 3 days and resulted in many changes afterwards (inclusion of NGO agenda in coalition agreement, memorandum of NGOs, changes of legislation, etc.) (Source: CNVOS)

Federation of NGOs in Serbia (FeNS)

Federation of Nongovernmental Organizations of Serbia (FENS) has been founded in 2003 recognizing the need of the sector in Serbia to have joint voice, better exchange of information, promoting the civil society values, influencing decision makers and triggering important social issues. In the first years, the basic focus of FENS was towards setting up enabling legal-fiscal NGO framework through institutionalized cooperation of NGOs with the governmental and private sector and improving public image of the sector. In addition, FENS gave support to organizations of persons with disabilities to bring about Law on persons with disabilities, to increase participation of NGOs in the Poverty reduction strategy and to work on the development of the anti-discrimination laws. Since 2004 FENS actively participated in GOTV campaigns, encouraging active citizenship. During the conference in 2004, the main discussion on the Conference was on three declarations: Declaration on Poverty reduction and role of NGOs, Declaration on youth participation (drafted by Students Unions) and Declaration on European integrations (Drafted by European Movement in Serbia). All three documents were thoroughly analyzed as priorities for the sector. The challenges of current political events were present in all discussions throughout 2005-2008. A need for more pressure on Government for finally changing the NGO law and defining financial frame for the sector were set as priority activity of FENS. Creating a body for institutional relations between NGOs and State and a necessity of a Strategy for development of third sector were also enhanced. Currently, there are over 550 FENS member organizations from more than 120 municipalities in Serbia, from all fields of the activities. **FENS** remains the largest NGO network dealing with issues of importance for the civil society in Serbia. (Source: Civic Initiatives, Balkan Civil Society Development Network)

Green list of Serbia

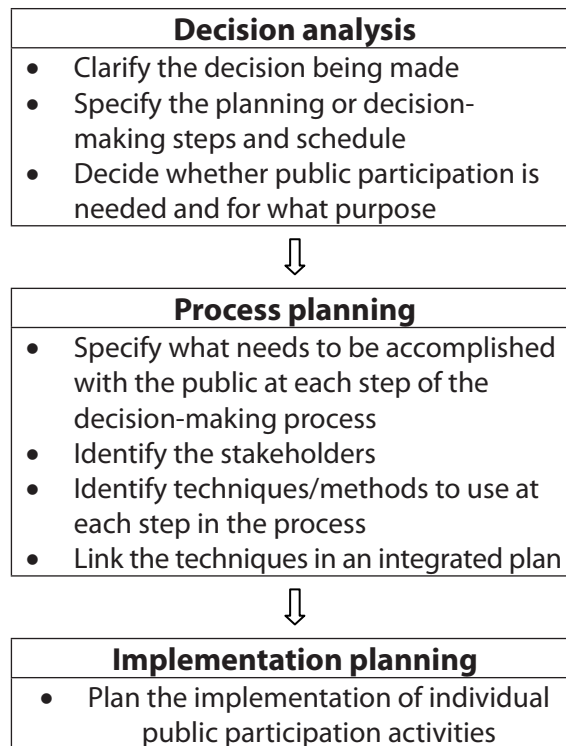
Green List of Serbia is coalition of 25 environmental organizations formed in the Fall of 2008, with the aim to raise awareness in the public on environmental issues in Serbian communities and advocate for potential solutions. Green List, though a young coalition, is currently implementing a campaign for solving the problem of waste disposal in Serbia. Campaign includes: 12 cleaning actions in different communities (from Vranje in South to Novi Sad in Vojvodina), eco bike tour of 500kms that will end in Novi Sad on EXIT festival. Until now, campaign involved more than 2,500 citizens in direct cleaning actions of wild garbage dumps, and succeeded to convince local authorities to accept some of the potential solutions (i.e. Public communal service taking responsibility for covering rural areas, accepting to organize garbage disposal through regional waste disposal place etc). Green List will continue to implement one national campaign per year. (Source: Civic Initiatives, BCSDN)

10. How to plan, implement and monitor efficient participation process?

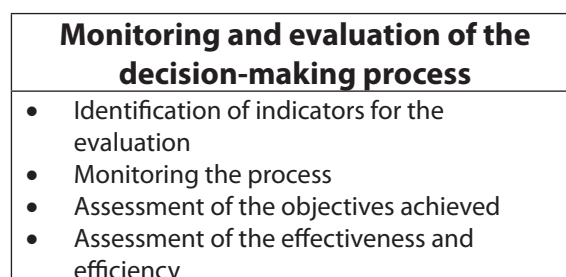
Public participation is a process and as every other process it should be carefully planned, implemented in monitored in order to reach as good results as possible. The basic principles are the same for all levels of participation and methods used. However, it should be noted that especially careful process management is needed for long-term, multi-stakeholder or even controversial issues.

There is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all public participation plan. But there is a systematic way of thinking through the issues that will help produce a successful plan that fits the unique requirements of a particular decision or issue.³

There are three stages in developing a public participation plan:⁴



We are adding the fourth step:



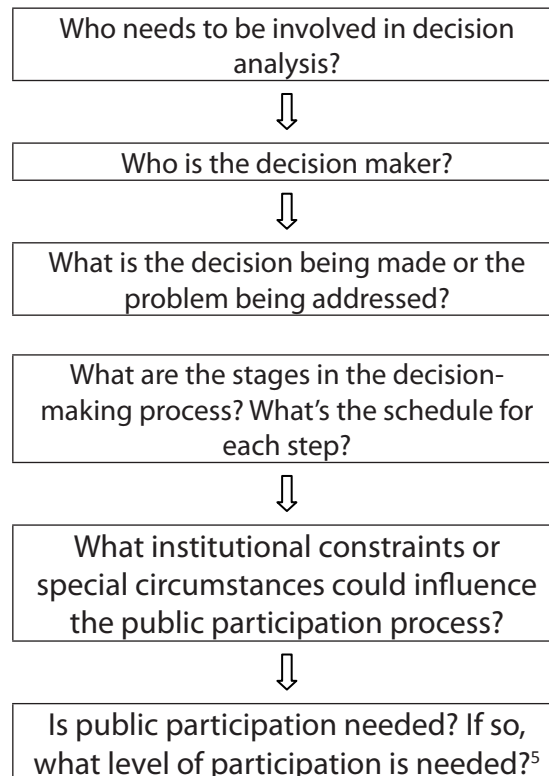
³ Creighton, J. L., 2005, p. 27.

⁴ Ibid., p. 29.

Decision analysis is designed to do four things:

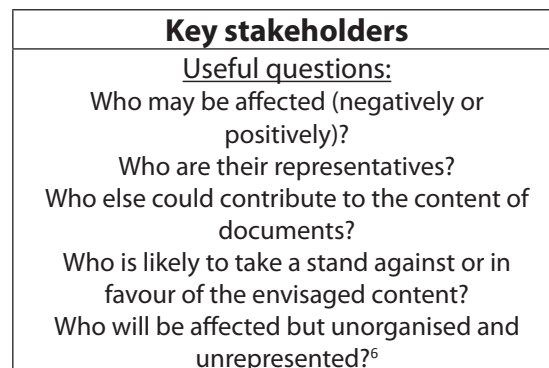
- Get everybody within your unit/department/organisation starting from a common understanding of the decision being made and the need for public participation.
- Clarify the steps and timing of the planning or decision-making process for the issue on which you are working.
- Identify any characteristics of the decision-making process that could undermine the credibility of the public participation process, so you can address them in advance.
- Make a decision about what level of participation is required.

Decision analysis has six steps:



Process planning

When the background is set, the process should be thoroughly planned. The main steps for the planning of the process are:



5 Ibid., p. 30.

6 Mežnarič, I.: 2008, p. 20-21.

7 Ibid., p. 24-25.



Staff and financial resources
<p><u>Useful questions:</u></p> <p>Are the participating experts (internal and external) qualified for effective communication with the public?</p> <p>Is their role in a particular event clearly specified and familiar to them?</p> <p>Is there enough staff on duty to carry out a particular task or event?</p> <p>Does the staff need additional education and training?</p> <p>Does the staff have adequate skills and knowledge for participation in group processes through public participation?</p> <p>Do we need external experts for managing those group processes that require special skills and knowledge?</p> <p>Do our financial resources allow the engagement of these experts?⁷</p>

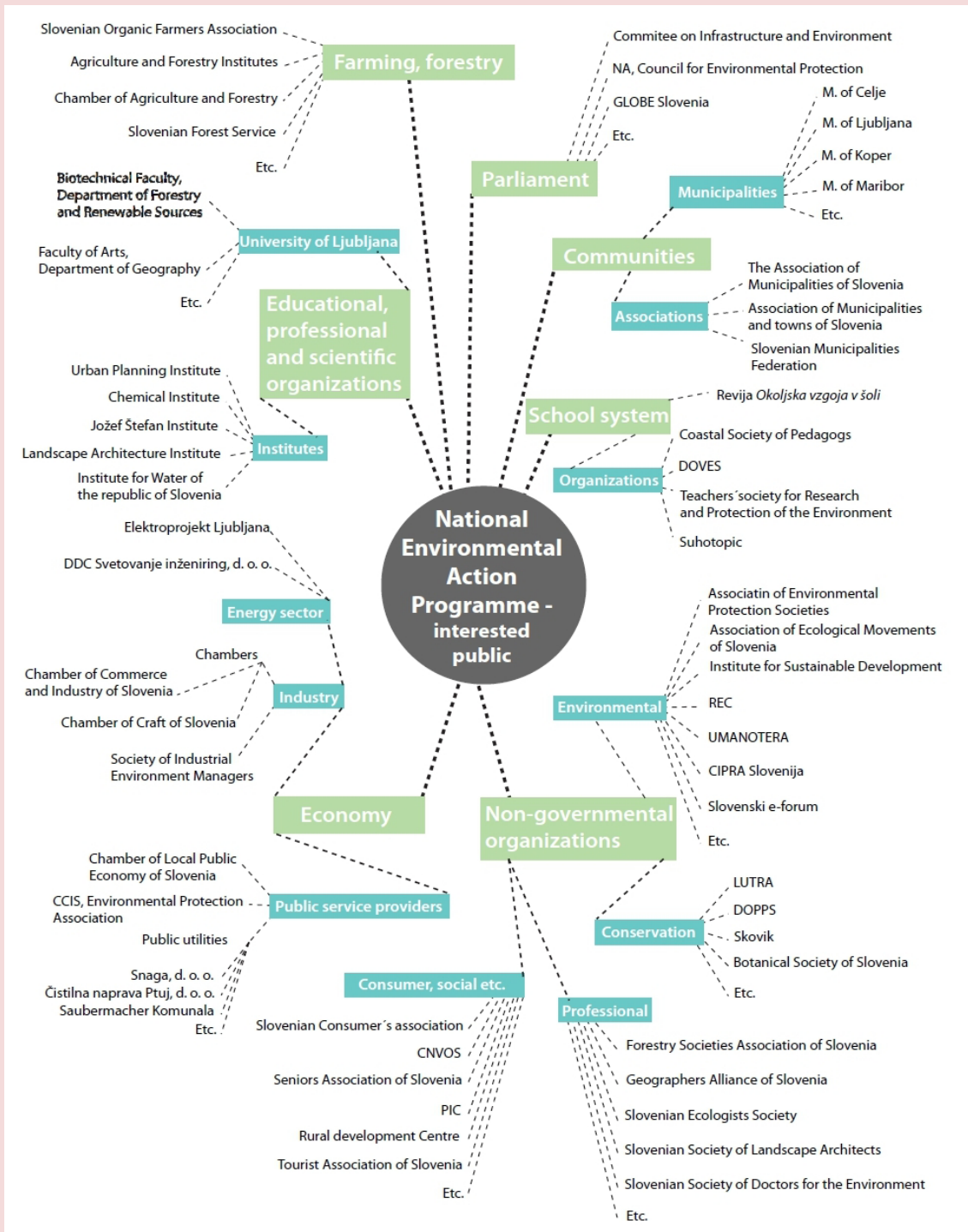


Process plan	<u>Useful questions for the timeframe:</u>
<p><u>Should contain at least:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • purpose of the process • objectives of the process; • progress of the process; • envisaged methods for involvement and participation; • detailed <u>timeframe of key events</u>; • identification of key stakeholders; • available and necessary financial and other resources (staff, ICT, time, place); • information required by the public; • methods of collecting, discussing and considering opinions and proposals; • methods for monitoring and evaluating the process. 	<p>Have you determined key events and tasks for implementation of the process?</p> <p>Have you determined tasks that are of crucial importance for implementation of the process?</p> <p>Have key events been planned so as not to coincide with national, cultural and religious holidays?</p> <p>Is there enough time between events to allow the monitoring and evaluation of the process?</p> <p>Is there enough time to communicate the response to the comments and opinions of the participants?</p> <p>Have we allowed sufficient time for the public to become acquainted with the content of documents?</p> <p>Have we allowed sufficient time for the public to prepare their response to the material and documents?⁸</p>

8 Ibid., p. 28.

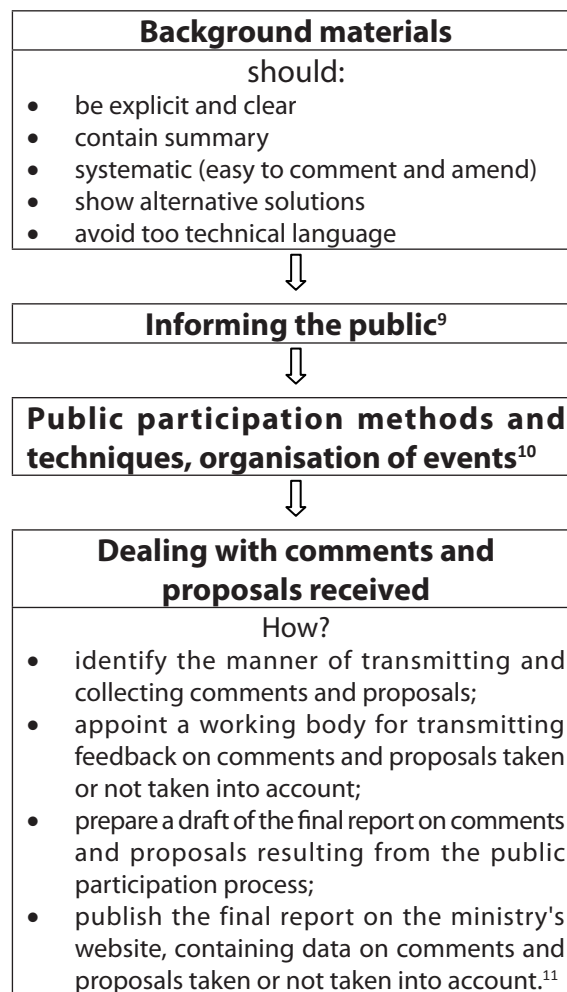
Slovenia: Preparation of the National Environment Action Programme

For the preparation of the National Environment Action Programme a mind map of the registered interested public (stakeholders) was made. (Source: Mežnarič, I.: 2008, p.23)



Implementation

Four main steps of the implementing the public participation process are:



Monitoring and evaluation of the process

The following key points for effective and efficient process of public participation in decision-making, adapted from the Austrian www.partizipation.at can be used by public administration as well as the NGOs as a checklist to assess the quality of the participation process in the phases of planning, implementing and monitoring:

Planning the public participation process

- *Were the purpose and objectives of the process determined?*
- *Has the process started early enough to allow the public to choose among open alternatives or exert influence on the content of the document?*
- *Has a person or department (office) responsible for the implementation of the process been designated?*
- *Have sufficient financial resources been assured?*
- *Have the key stakeholders for the issue under discussion been identified? Does the process*

9 Possible technics for sharing information are described above.

10 Possible methods and techniques are described above.

11 Mežnarič, I.: 2008, p. 40.

allow for simple inclusion of those stakeholders whose involvement is restricted in any way (socially deprived and excluded, minorities, marginal groups, etc.)?

- *Have the duration of the whole process, its individual phases and key milestones been set?*
- *Has a framework timetable of the process been drawn up?*

Implementing the public participation process

- *Have the legal obligations and provisions on public information regarding possibilities and conditions for the participation of the public been respected?*
- *Has the information required for informing the public been ensured? In which form (paper, electronic form, etc.)?*
- *Has the material (bases, opinions, positions, draft) for informing the public been prepared? Is the prepared material clear, coherent and complete?*
- *Have the accessibility of materials been provided for? Will all materials be available on the website of the Ministry? Has any method of involving public media in the scheme for informing the public on the process been used?*
- *Have measures for strengthening the involvement of key stakeholders and other interested publics in the process been ensured?*
- *What modes of participation (public debate, workshop, etc.) have been used?*
- *Have officials participated in these events (representatives of the Ministry, document drafters, experts, etc.)?*
- *Has the mode of submitting comments and proposals regarding the draft document been established?*
- *Was it clearly defined in what phase of the project the comments will be collected?*
- *Has the location for collecting comments and opinions been defined or the person responsible appointed?*
- *Have the methods for responding to comments and opinions been defined?*
- *Have the document drafters taken reasonable account of the comments and opinions and provided their explanations? Has the feedback on taking into account or rejecting the comments and proposals submitted by the public been given?*

Monitoring and evaluation of the public participation process

- *Have the process monitoring methods been included to the process plan?*
- *Have the methods and tools for evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of the process been defined?*
- *Have the criteria to establish the achievement of the objectives of the process and fulfilment of its purpose been set?*
- *Have the method for reporting on monitoring and evaluation been established?*
- *Has a special meeting of the providers with the purpose of exchanging experience and knowledge gained in the process been planned?*
- *Has the method for evaluating submitted opinions, positions and comments been defined?*

Slovenia: The Mirror to the Government Project

The project of measuring the level of participation of civil society, which was implemented by Legal Information Centre for NGOs, presented an in-depth analysis of selected government acts. It assessed cooperation of public authorities (ministries and government offices) with a set of detailed indicators, which were measuring: general mechanisms of inclusion of the civil society, enabling environment and the procedure of preparation of legal acts. The section on the procedure included questions about: timing and methods of informing about the launch of the process, availability of background material, clarity and visibility of procedure, organisation of meetings for interested publics, provision of feedback etc. Source: http://www.pic.si/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=48&Itemid=70.

11. Legal framework of public participation

Above we described the decision-making process and its different levels, different tools for public participation, support mechanisms and framework documents. However, public participation can be more formalized in different types of documents and legal acts.

The significance of public participation has been recognised by many international organisations, such as the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the World Bank, OECD, etc.

At the EU level, in 2011 the European Commission published the White paper on European Governance¹², which contains recommendations put forward in order to make the functioning of EU institutions more transparent, accountable, participatory, and effective. Among others, the Commission proposed a greater involvement of CSOs in the EU decision-making process in recognition of the important role they play in modern democracies, as well as the need to develop general principles and minimum standards for consultations with the Commission.¹³ In 2003 the General Principles and Minimum Standards for Consultations of Interested Parties with the European Commission¹⁴ came into force, furthermore, public participation is mentioned also in the Lisbon Treaty.

On the national level some countries include public participation in political documents, such as national strategies, etc. Legal solutions differ from country to country. Thus far, few countries have adopted comprehensive mechanism for citizen participation. Examples include Romania, Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the United Kingdom, Croatia, and Austria. In some countries, citizen participation is governed by custom law (e.g., Sweden, Denmark, and Norway), while in others this issue is addressed in a constitution, albeit in a fairly general fashion. For example, the Constitution of Switzerland imposes general obligation on the government to consult with citizens on a narrowly defined scope of issues.¹⁵

At a first glance, we can state that especially in developing democracies countries it is almost necessary to pass at least somewhat binding documents. Such acts can help to harmonise practise among different ministries, providing equal opportunities for NGOs from different fields and in a long term raise level of public participation.

However, the last *Mirror to the Government* monitoring that was implemented in Slovenia in 2010 showed that a passing of the Resolution on Legislative Regulation in the Parliament significantly contributed to more open decision-making process, while further changes to the Government Rules of Procedure at least in 2010 have not made notable change.¹⁶ Also the experience from other countries thus far seems to suggest that legally binding instruments (such as the Romanian "Sunshine Law" and to a lesser extent BiH Regulations) do not necessarily provide for a more effective framework for citizen participation as compared to codes and other legally non-binding instruments (embraced by Great Britain, Croatia, Austria, etc.), in

12 **European Governance: A White Paper, Commission of the European Communities (2001)**, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2001/com2001_0428en01.pdf.

13 Golubovic, D.: 2010.

14 Towards a reinforced culture of consultation and dialogue - General principles and minimum standards for consultation of interested parties by the Commission, **Commission of the European Communities (2003)**, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2002:0704:FIN:en:PDF>.

15 Golubovic, D.: 2010.

16 Divjak, T.: 2011, 7.

particular if their implementation requires high transactional costs.¹⁷ This can lead us to the conclusion that legally binding documents are not necessary for enabling public participation environment; political documents (such as resolutions, codes, etc.) can also significantly improve the situation, especially if they are supported by political will, promotion and other support measures.

For enabling public participation environment is crucial that the document defines key stakeholders, responsibilities of the state actors, general principles and minimum standards of consultations.

In below cases of good practice we describe three levels of public participation formalization – from completely unbinding code, through Government's Rules of procedure to law on public participation.

Montenegro: Regulation on the manner and procedure of establishing cooperation between public administration bodies and non-governmental organizations and Regulation on the manner of conducting public discussion in the process of drafting laws

Government of Montenegro, at its session held on 22 December 2011, adopted the Regulation on the manner and procedure of establishing cooperation between public administration bodies and non-governmental organizations. This Regulation defines the procedure of informing NGOs on the work of public administration bodies, procedure of consulting NGOs during drafting and adopting acts which were not envisaged by the annual working plan. Additionally, this Regulation defines participation of NGO representatives in working groups and other bodies established by public administration bodies, i.e. criteria and the manner of selecting NGO representatives in these bodies.

Regulation on the manner of conducting public discussion in the process of drafting laws, adopted by the Government of Montenegro at the beginning of 2012, defines the manner of organizing public discussion, the content of the public discussion programme, public call for the discussion and its duration, minutes and report from the public discussion, as well as the deadline for their publishing.

Croatia: Code of practice on consultation with the interested public in procedures of adopting laws, other regulations and acts

The code was passed in November 2009 by the Croatian Government. Apart from the general consultation principles, standards and measures (timely information, notifications to public, minimum time-limit for consultations 15 days, feedback, etc.), the Code of Practice also envisages the creation of guidelines for its implementation, as well as a programme of methodical education for consultation coordinators. The coordinators should be named by all state administration bodies and government offices in charge of producing draft laws, other regulations and acts, and serve as a contact person for the purpose of tracking and coordinating of consultation activities with the interested public. The code also envisages its implementation on the regional and local level. (Source: Office for Cooperation with NGOs, <http://www.uzuvrh.hr/vijestEN.aspx?pageID=2&newsID=1006>)

United Kingdom: Code on practice on Consultation

In the United Kingdom citizen participation is governed by the Code on Practice on Consultation (2004). The Code is a further elaboration of one of the five compacts, the Compact Code of Good Practice on Consultation and Policy Appraisal, that were signed following the adoption of the Compact on Government's Relations with the Voluntary and Community Sector. It proclaims six principles that the state administration bodies must observe in the process of public policy consultations. These principles apply accordingly with regard to consultations that take place before the government takes its position on the EU draft directives. As stated in the introduction of the Code, it is a document that is not legally binding and therefore may not derogate (domestic) laws and other binding legal instruments, as well as the EU *acquis communautaire*. On the other hand, the Code is considered generally binding for state administration bodies. This means that the violation of the Code may result in political or disciplinary liability of the heads and employees of the state administration bodies. (Source: ICNL, http://www.icnl.org/knowledge/ijnl/vol12iss4/art_2.htm)

¹⁷ Golubovic, D.: 2010.

Slovenia: Government's Rules of Procedure

With the Resolution on Legislative Regulation that was passed by the Slovene Parliament on November 2009 and changes of the Government's Rules of procedure (April 2010) minimum standards of consultation were set: all drafts should be published on the Internet, the consultation period for all drafts should last at least 30–60 days; the responsible body for each draft should prepare a consultation report, clearly defining which comments were received, how they considered them, which were taken on board and which and why they were not. In some cases public is not invited to participate (e.g. for actions taken under the urgent procedure, draft state budget, the proposal of the annual financial statement of the national budget, the proposal of the Government Rules of procedure, the proposal of development planning and implementation of development policies, etc.). (Source: CNVOS)

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Rules on Consultation in Policy making

In BiH the Rules govern the enactment of general legal acts which are adopted by the BiH Council of Ministers and other institutions at the state level. The Rules prescribe the minimum level of consultations between those bodies and "the public, legal entities, and groups of citizens which do not belong to the government structure". Minimum consultations include the obligation of a relevant body to post a draft of regulations on the Internet page, the possibility of providing comments to a draft by interested parties via the Internet, as well as solicitation of comments by persons who are on the consultation list of the relevant institution. Significantly, the obligation for minimum consultation is not subject to any exceptions. However, the Rules do not envisage any specific sanctions for violation of the consultation procedure. In such cases, the Council of Ministers may (but is not obliged to) refuse to put a draft on its agenda. If so, the Council's Chief Secretary shall return a draft to a responsible body and request that it complete the process of consultation within a prescribed deadline, before the draft is reintroduced to the Council for its consideration. (Source: ICNL, http://www.icnl.org/knowledge/ijnl/vol12iss4/art_2.htm)

Hungary: Act on Public Participation in Developing Legislation

Hungarian Public Participation Act was passed by the National Assembly in November 2010. Under this act all draft laws, government decrees and ministerial decrees except drafts on payment obligations, state subsidies, the Budget and its execution, etc. shall be submitted to public consultations. Drafts should be made public on the Internet in a way to allow sufficient time for substantive appraisal of the draft. The responsible minister has to prepare a typified summary of comments with reasons for rejections, if some comments were rejected. The act provides possibilities for preliminary comments, which can be sent before the official general consultations. The competent minister can create a strategic partnership to draft the legislation with different stakeholders, such as NGOs, churches, professional and scientific organisations, etc. (Source: http://www.regulatelobbying.com/images/Hungary_New_2011_act_on_public_participation_in_developing_legislation.docx)

Romania: Law on Transparent decision-making

Romania has chosen to address the consultation procedure in a separate law, the Law on Transparent Decision-Making by State Bodies and Local Governments (2003), the so-called "Sunshine Law." The Law obliges state administration and local governments to consult with "citizens and their associations" in the course of adopting general legal acts within their respective purviews. The Law defines the right to consultation as an enforceable rather than declaratory right, pursuant to the rules governing the administrative procedure. However, it appears that the scope of this protection is somewhat limited, as it is very likely that the process of consultation will be brought to a conclusion before the administrative procedure for the alleged violation of the Law is brought to a conclusion. State and municipality officials that breach provisions of the Law are subject to disciplinary liability, pursuant to the labor law and regulations governing civil servants. (Source: ICNL, http://www.icnl.org/knowledge/ijnl/vol12iss4/art_2.htm)

12. Conclusion

With this Manual we wanted to illustrate different possibilities of public participation, not only different levels of decision-making process, but especially a broad selection of different tools that can be used for effective public participation.

With cases of good practice we wanted to show that all presented tools are already broadly used in Europe and whole world. Furthermore, good practices can help you to identify appropriate tools for specific issue, level of participation and profile of stakeholders.

The key to successful public participation is awareness on the importance of public inclusion on one hand and knowledge about the management of the process on the other hand. We hope that the guide will help you to better understand the meaning and role of public participation.

13. Sources and further reading

Useful web-sites

- **Website on participation and sustainable development** www.partizipation.at, an initiative of the Austrian Ministry of the Environment, provides basic information about participation – including case histories of successful participation processes and an overview of the various methods of participation. Info: <http://www.partizipation.at/index.php?english>
- **Website on public participation** www.peopleandparticipation.net offers process planer, description of different methods for public participation and an extensive list of case studies, mostly from UK.
- **Website** www.goodpracticeparticipate.govt.nz was constructed by New Zealand Government to guide public officials and others through civic engagement. The website works as a comprehensive guide on public participation explaining the benefits, the process, methods, tools for monitoring and evaluation, etc.

Useful publications:

- Creighton, J.L. *The public participation handbook: making better decision through citizen involvement*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005.
- Gastil, J., Levine, P. (ed.). *The deliberative democracy handbook: strategies for effective civic engagement in the twenty first century*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005.
- Gramberger, M. *The Citizens as Partners - OECD HANDBOOK ON INFORMATION, CONSULTATION AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN POLICY-MAKING*. Paris: OECD, 2001, http://www.ezd.si/fileadmin/doc/4_AKTIVNO_DRZAVLJANSTVO/Viri/Citizens_as_partners_hanbook_oecd.pdf.
- *People & Participation -How to put citizens at the heart of decision-making*. London: Involve, 2005, http://www.ncdd.org/exchange/files/docs/People_Participation.pdf.
- *Shaping the future together. The Public Participation Manual*. Vienna: Austrian Society for Environment and Technology, 2007, http://www.partizipation.at/fileadmin/media_data/Downloads/Publikationen/participationmanual_en.pdf.
- Mežnarič, I. *Handbook on Planning, Managing and Evaluating Public Participation Processes*. Ljubljana: Ministry of Public administration, 2008, http://www.mju.gov.si/fileadmin/mju.gov.si/pageuploads/Mojca/Brina/Zadnji_angl_LAHEK.pdf.
- *Participatory and Deliberative Methods Toolkit, How to Connect with Citizens, A Practitioner's Manual*. King Baudouin Foundation and the Flemish Institute for Science and Technology Assessment (viWTA), 2005, http://www.kbs-frb.be/uploadedFiles/KBS-FRB/Files/EN/PUB_1540_Participatory_toolkit_New_edition.pdf
- Golubovic, D.: *An Enabling Framework for Citizen Participation in Public Policy: An Outline of Some of the Major Issues Involved*, The International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law, Volume 12, Issue 4, November 2010, http://www.icnl.org/knowledge/ijnl/vol12iss4/art_2.htm.
- Hadzi-Miceva Evans, K.: *European practices on implementation of policy documents and liaison offices that support civil society development*, Budapest: ECNL, 2009, <http://www.icnl.org/knowledge/themes/ngogovcoop/paperpol.pdf>.

- Divjak, T.: *The 2009/2010 government mirror project: public participation in legislation preparation procedures: report*, Ljubljana: PIC, 2011.
- Council of Europe, CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR CIVIL PARTICIPATION IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS (2009), http://www.coe.int/t/ngo/code_good_prac_en.asp.

Additional Databases of Good practice:

Web site: www.activecitizenship.net: The joint activity of Active Citizenship Network (ACN) and the Active Citizenship Foundation (FONDACA) was implemented with partner organizations from Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Turkey. The main activities included collecting 50 best practices regarding civic participation in the participating countries and drafting the European Charter of Active Citizenship. Info:

<http://www.activecitizenship.net/content/blogcategory/57/109/>

CEECN Best practice database: <http://www.ceecn.net/best.html>.

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