**UNITED
NATIONS**

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Economic and Social Council

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE
CONVENTION ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION,
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING AND
ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

Working Group of the Parties to the Convention

Seventh meeting
Geneva, 2–4 May 2007
Item 7 of the provisional agenda
Electronic information tools and the clearing-house mechanism

**REPORT ON THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE TASK FORCE
ON ELECTRONIC INFORMATION TOOLS**

Addendum

**QUESTIONNAIRE TO ASSESS IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES
ON ELECTRONIC INFORMATION TOOLS (DECISION II/3)**

At the fourth meeting of the Task Force on Electronic Information Tools (7–8 November 2005), the secretariat was asked to develop a questionnaire to assist with monitoring implementation of the "Recommendations on the more effective use of electronic information tools to provide public access to environmental information" annexed to decision II/3 on electronic information tools and the clearing-house mechanism (ECE/MP.PP/2005/2/Add.4). The questionnaire, which had been prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Chair of the Task Force, was circulated to the national focal points and members of the Task Force on 27 October 2006.

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**Questionnaire to assess implementation of the recommendations of the Meeting
of the Parties on electronic information tools (decision II/3)**

1.   In your country, which categories of environmental information (according to para. 9 (c)
of the recommendations annexed to decision II/3) are publicly accessible *through the Internet?*

> a)   Reports on the state of the environment are, *through the Internet:*
>
>> (i)   Generally available __   Partly available __   Not available __
>>
>> (ii)   If the reports are available, please provide the Web link(s).
>>
>> (iii)   Are reports on the state of the environment legally required to be
>> available? Yes __   No __
>>
>> (iv)   If these reports are not generally available, do you have plans to meet
>> requirements (according to article 5, para. 3) for progressive improvement in their
>> availability? Yes __   No __
>>
>> (v)   Comments:

> a.   Texts of legislation, regulations, rules and other legally binding instruments on or
> relating to the environment are, *through the Internet:*
>
>> (i)   Generally available __Partly available __   Not available __
>>
>> (ii)   If the texts are available, please provide the Web link(s).
>>
>> (iii)   Are texts of legislation, regulations, rules and other legally binding
>> instruments on or relating to the environment legally required to be available?
>> Yes __   No __
>>
>> (iv)   If these texts are not generally available, do you have plans to meet
>> requirements (according to article 5, para. 3) for progressive improvement in their
>> availability? Yes __   No __
>>
>> (v)   Comments:

> c)   Texts of policies, plans and programmes on or relating to the environment, and
> environmental agreements are, *through the Internet:*
>
>> (i)   Generally available __Partly available __   Not available __
>>
>> (ii)   If the texts are available, please provide the Web link(s).
>>
>> (iii)   Are texts of policies, plans and programmes on or relating to the
>> environment legally required to be available?   Yes __   No __
>>
>> (iv)   If these texts are not generally available, do you have plans to meet
>> requirements (according to article 5, para. 3) for progressive improvement in their
>> availability? Yes __   No __
>>
>> (v)   Comments:

d)   Environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment documentation, where it is held in electronic form, is, *through the Internet:*

> (i)   Generally available __   Partly available __   Not available __
>
> (ii)   If the documentation is available, please provide the Web link(s).
>
> (iii)   Are environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment documentation legally required to be available?   Yes __   No __
>
> (iv)   If the documentation is not generally available, do you have plans to progressively improve access to it? Yes __   No __
>
> (v)   Comments:

e)   Reference to where environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment documentation can be accessed *through the Internet* is:

> (i)   Generally available __   Partly available __   Not available __
>
> (ii)   If the information is available, please provide the Web link(s).

f)   Data on environmentally significant releases and transfers of pollutants, within the scope of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs), are, *through the Internet:*

> (i)   Generally available __   Partly available __   Not available __
>
> (ii)   If data are available, please provide the Web link(s).
>
> (iii)   Are PRTR data legally required to be available?   Yes __   No __
>
> (iv)   If data are not generally available, do you have plans to progressively improve access? Yes __   No __
>
> (v)   Comments:

g)   Information on mechanisms related to access to justice within the meaning of the Convention is, *through the Internet:*

> (i)   Generally available __   Partly available __   Not available __
>
> (ii)   If the information is available, please provide the Web link(s).
>
> (iii)   Is information on mechanisms related to access to justice legally required to be available? Yes __   No __
>
> (iv)   If the information is not generally available, do you have plans to progressively improve access to it? Yes __   No __
>
> (v)   Comments:

2.   In your country, among documentation forming an integral part of any licensing or permitting process subject to the provisions of article 6, and where the documentation exists in electronic form, which categories of environmental information are publicly accessible *through the Internet*?

a)   Applications for licences or permits are, *through the Internet:*

      (i)   Generally available __   Partly available __ Not available __

      (ii)   If the applications are available, please provide the Web link (s).

      (iii)   Are applications for licenses or permits legally required to be available?

Yes__ No __

      (iv)   If the applications are not generally available, do you have plans to progressively improve access to them? Yes __   No __

      (v)   Comments:

b)   Draft licences or permits and their attached conditions are, *through the Internet:*

      (i)   Generally available __ Partly available __   Not available __

      (ii)   If the materials are available, please provide the Web link(s).

      (iii)   Are draft licenses or permits legally required to be available?
Yes __ No __

      (iv)   If this information is not generally available, do you have plans to progressively improve access to it? Yes __ No __

      (v)   Comments:

c)   Final licences or permits and their attached conditions are, *through the Internet:*

      (i)   Generally available __Partly available __   Not available __

      (ii)   If the materials are available, please provide the Web link(s).

      (iii)   Are final licenses or permits legally required to be available?
Yes __ No __

      (iv)   If they are not generally available, do you have plans to progressively improve access to them? Yes __   No __

      (v)   Comments:

d)   Comments of third parties on draft permits and conditions are, *through the Internet:*

      (i)   Generally available __Partly available __   Not available __

      (ii)   If comments are available, please provide the Web link(s).

      (iii)   Are comments of third parties legally required to be available?
Yes __No __

      (iv)   If comments are not generally available, do you have plans to progressively improve access to them? Yes __   No __

      (v)   Comments:

e)   Where it is not available in electronic form, a reference to where documentation forming an integral part of any licensing or permitting process subject to the provisions of article 6 can be accessed is, *through the Internet:*

(i)   Generally available __   Partly available __   Not available __

(ii)   Please provide Web link, if applicable.

(iii)   Is such a reference legally required to be available? Yes__   No__

(iv)   If not generally available, do you have plans to progressively improve access to this information? Yes __   No __

(v)   Comments:

3.   In your country, which categories of environmental information (according to paragraph 9 (d) of the recommendations annexed to decision II/3) are publicly accessible *through the Internet?*

a)   Environmental monitoring data, including spatial attributes, held by or on behalf of public authorities are, *through the Internet:*

(i)   Generally available __   Partly available __   Not available __

(ii)   If the data are available, please provide the Web link(s).

(iii)   Is such information legally required to be available? Yes__   No__

(iv)   If the data are not generally available, do you have plans to progressively improve access? Yes __   No __

(v) Comments:

b)   Product information that enables consumers to make informed environmental choices is, *through the Internet:*

(i)   Generally available __   Partly available __   Not available __

(ii)   If the information is available, please provide the Web link(s).

(iii)   Is the information legally required to be available? Yes__   No__

(iv)   If the information is not generally available, do you have plans to progressively improve access to it? Yes __ No __

(v)   Comments:

c)   Information on good practice and guidelines on better environmental management are, *through the Internet:*

>   (i)   Generally available __Partly available __   Not available __

>   (ii)   If the materials are available, please provide the Web link(s).

>   (iii)   Is such information legally required to be available? Yes__   No__

>   (iv)   If the material is not generally available, do you have plans to progressively improve access to it? Yes __ No __

>   (v)   Comments:

d)   Appropriate metadata or background information to make the methods, processes and standards of data collection transparent to future data users is, *through the Internet:*

>   (i)   Generally available __   Partly available __   Not available __

>   (ii)   If the information is available, please provide the Web link(s).

>   (iii)   Is such information legally required to be available? Yes__ No__

>   (iv)   If the information is not generally available, do you have plans to progressively improve access to it? Yes __ No __

>   (v)   Comments:

e)   Meta-information (including catalogues of data sources and details of the scope of information held by public authorities and mechanisms for the provision of access to environmental information) is, *through the Internet:*

>   (i)   Generally available __   Partly available __   Not available __

>   (ii)   If the meta-information is available, please provide the Web link(s).

>   (iii)   Is such meta-information legally required to be available? Yes__   No__

>   (iv)   If the information is not generally available, do you have plans to progressively improve access to it? Yes __ No __

>   (v)   Comments:

4.   In your country, what proportion of members of the public has electronic access:

>   a)   In their place of residence?
>   More than 80% __   60–79% __   40–59% __   20–39% __   Less than 20% __

>   b)   In their place of employment or educational institution?
>   More than 80% __   60–79% __   40–59% __   20–39% __   Less than 20% __

>   c)   In a publicly accessible facility (Internet café, public library, kiosk, etc.)?
>   More than 80% __   60–79% __   40–59% __   20–39% __   Less than 20% __

5.   In your country, has the scope of environmental information that is electronically accessible since 2005:

Generally increased? __   Partly increased? __   Remained the same? __   Declined? __

6.   For the majority of Internet users in your country, what is the most common form of Internet access?[1]

Dial-up (telephony) __   Wi-Fi (wireless networking) __   Broadband __   Don't know __

7.   Please describe any methods or measures that are used to gauge the level of actual use of environmental information accessed electronically in your country (for example, tracking of Web traffic statistics on official environmental information sites).

8.   Please supply, in the following table, (a) the main users of environmental information in your country, and (b) methods used by your ministry or agency to assess the identified users' information needs.

Main users of environmental information	Methods used to identify users' information needs
Government	
Academia / Schools	
General public	
Non-governmental organizations	
Private sector	
Others (please identify)	

9.   If your ministry or agency has assessed user needs for environmental information, please briefly describe how successful this assessment has been.

10.   In your country, how is progress on improving electronic access to environmental information being communicated to the public?

11.   What concrete steps have been taken to ensure that information is available electronically? Please include reference to national Web portals or other sites of interest.

12.   Is public access to environmental information through the Internet or other electronic means provided as a matter of practice? Is there a legally enforceable right to such access? If possible, please include reference to relevant national policies or provisions of national law referring to this right.

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[1] Broadband is a term that encompasses DSL (digital subscriber line), cable and satellite high-speed Internet connections. Variants include ADSL, HDSL, IDSL, VDSL and SDSL.

13.   Has your country formulated and implemented national "e-government" strategies for the use of electronic tools to facilitate administrative processes and services, and to make public administration more transparent and efficient in providing available environmental information and dealing with requests for such information from the public? Please include relevant title(s), name(s), contact information of responsible officer(s) and time frames for implementation.

14.   In your country, in which types of environmental decision-making process (in the sense of articles 6, 7 and 8 of the Convention) may public participation take place electronically? What are the main steps in the process? If possible, please give concrete examples.

15.   Have comprehensive environment-related programmes, including specific training programmes linking the use of information technology applications to the promotion of good environmental governance, been developed and implemented in your country?

   a)   Yes __   No __

   b)   Is the training programme:

         (i)   Ongoing __   Periodic __   One-time __

         (ii)   Financed through international assistance __
                State-financed (national or local government) __
                Privately financed (philanthropy, NGO, private sector) __
                Other (please describe):

   c)   Please provide the date(s) of initiation and target audience of environment-related training programmes:

16.   Please describe any measures taken to promote the involvement of different stakeholders representing providers and users of information, including civil society and private-sector institutions, in the development and use of electronic tools to provide environmental information to the public?

17.   What are the most important challenges and obstacles in your country to the use of electronic tools to implement the recommendations contained in decision II/3? You can use the list of possible challenges in the table "Challenges and obstacles to the use of electronic tools to implement the recommendations contained in decision II/3" at the end of the questionnaire as a reference.

18.   Does your country have an Aarhus Clearinghouse national node Web portal? If yes, please provide the Web link:

19.   Does your country have a designated Aarhus Clearinghouse national node administrator or contact point responsible for collecting, managing and updating the information contained in the national node? Yes __   No __

a)   **Responsible for content management:**
   Name:
   Title:
   Organization:
   Postal address:
   Telephone:
   Fax:
   E-mail:

b)   **Technical contact:**
   Name:
   Telephone:
   E-mail:

20.   Date of launch of national node of the Clearinghouse: (month/year)

21.   How often does your national node administration update the national Clearinghouse Web portal? Monthly __   Quarterly __   Annually __   Never __

22.   Approximately how many resource entries in the Aarhus Clearinghouse for Environmental Democracy (http://aarhusclearinghouse.unece.org) reflect national content?

More than 10 __   5 to 10 __   Less than 5 __   None __

23.   What method of communicating resource entries to the Aarhus Clearinghouse for Environmental Democracy does your organization or agency prefer to use? Does it submit information:

   a)   By e-mail to aarhus.clearinghouse@unece.org ___

   b)   By e-mail to staff of the Aarhus Convention secretariat ___

   c)   By e-mail to national experts serving on the Task Force ___

   d)   By e-mail to the Clearinghouse national node administrator ___

   e)   Using the Clearinghouse's online form accessible to registered content managers ___

   f)   Other (please specify):

24.   Please describe any measures undertaken to promote the involvement of different stakeholders representing providers and users of information, including civil society and private-sector institutions, in the national node of the Clearinghouse.

25.   Please provide any additional comments below.

Challenges and obstacles regarding the use of electronic tools to implement the recommendations contained in decision II/3

Information tools	Relevant provisions of the Aarhus Convention	Challenges & obstacles regarding ICT implementation
ELECTRONIC • Internet • E-mail • Electronic community notice boards/ billboards • CD-ROM • Electronic data accessible through bar-code scanning • Electronic data accessible through touch-tone dialing • SMS (short message service) • Public electronic information kiosks • Telephone hotlines/fax • TV teletext • Other (to be specified) **NON-ELECTRONIC** • Brochures • Exhibitions • "Green" community advisors • Info-shops (walk-in) • Libraries • Newspapers • Open days • Posters • TV, cinema, radio • Other (to be specified)	**ARTICLE 4, PARA. 1** Response to requests for environmental information in the form requested **ARTICLE 5, PARA. 3** a) Reports on the state of the environment b) Texts of legislation on or relating to the environment c) Policies, plans and programmes on or relating to the environment, and environmental agreements d) Other information, to the extent that the availability of such information in this form would facilitate the application of national law implementing the Convention. **ARTICLE 6** Public participation in decisions on specific activities which may have a significant effect on the environment **ARTICLE 7** Public participation concerning plans, programmes and policies relating to the environment **ARTICLE 8** Public participation during the preparation of executive regulations and/or generally applicable legally binding normative instruments	**INSTITUTIONAL** • Limited scope or extent of environmental data collected in your country • Limited standardization of data sets • Poor cooperation with other agencies collecting environmental data • Limited interest in using ICT among: -Data providers (you) -Data users (please quantify) • Other priorities (please specify) • Lack of time to explore/ implement **ECONOMIC** • Limited market availability of equipment • Lack of IT service providers • Lack of technical support • High cost of online access • High cost of equipment • Poor state of telecommunication networks **CULTURAL** • Limited expertise/know-how **LEGAL** • Unclear rules, legislation on environment and informational responsibility **OTHER** (to be specified)