

THE UNECE CONVENTION ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS (AARHUS CONVENTION)

TASK FORCE ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION

ELECTRONIC INFORMATION TOOLS: CASE STUDY BY ARMENIA

ECOLEX

www.ecolex.am

I. Description

- **1. Title** – www.ecolex.am
- **2. Brief description** – web-based e-participation portal to enable public participation in the process of elaboration of draft legal acts related to the environment
- **3. Link(s) to electronic information tool(s) (if available online) or the description:** www.ecolex.am
- **4. Type (governmental, non-governmental, municipal, other):** non-governmental in cooperation with governmental institutions
- **5. Scope (international, sub-regional, national, local):** national
- **6. Working language(s):** Armenian, all information save for draft legal acts is available also in English and Russian.
- **7. Target users:** civil society, government, business, experts and others
- **8. Starting year:** 2016
- **9. Budget and funding source:** Budget of the whole project – 39,995USD. www.ecolex.am is the output of the 2nd stage of the project with estimated expenses around 9000USD.
- **10. Contact: (name, functional title, institution, email, phone number)** – Prof. Aida Iskoyan, President of “Environmental Public Advocacy Center” NGO, aidaisk@arminco.com, Tel: +374 91 420021

II. Implementation

- **11. Policy, legal and institutional context:** Elaboration of www.ecolex.am is in line within the national action plan of promotion the implementation of the Aarhus Convention.
- **12. Partner organizations involved:** Ministry of Nature Protection of RA, Ministry of Justice of RA, Environmental Law Research Center of the Faculty of Law, Yerevan State University
- **13. Stakeholders involved, their expected benefits:** The web-resource has open access and NGOs, business, experts and others can freely obtain their profiles.
- **14. User needs and methods of their assessment:** Elaboration of www.ecolex.am is based on the result of survey conducted among civil society and governmental institutions both on the national and regional level. The needs revealed brought the expert group to the conclusion that e-participation platform will ensure greater level of transparency and better feedback by the decision-makers.
- **15. Technology choice:** E-tools enabling free access to dynamically updated web-resource of draft legal acts; user-friendly classification and easy access to frequently used documents; public comments and remarks addressed directly to the decision-making authority; pre-review of the public comments solely in terms of ethical concerns.

III. Evaluation

- **16. Results:** Since the web-portal has been launched quite recently, it is premature to speak about results at this point.
- **17. Efficiency gains:** See above.
- **18. Risks:** Risks have been assessed yet at the initial phase of the project which amount to the following:
 - Delay with the preparation and functioning of the web-site due to technical reasons and lack of precedent of preparation of similar resource;
 - Improper update and administration of the web-resource;
 - Low level of
- **19. Challenges encountered (please indicate resolved or not):** Analysis still ongoing.
- **20. Lessons learned:** It is premature to shape statements at this stage. Relevant conclusions will be made by the end of June.
- **21. Conditions for successful replication**
 - Sustainable funding source to ensure maintenance and functioning of the web-page;
 - Training rounds and awareness raising campaigns for different stakeholders to promote using www.ecolex.am.
- **22. Overall assessment of the tool:** Preparation of www.ecolex.am has been supported both by the Ministry of Nature Protection and the Ministry of Justice of RA by corresponding letters which underlined the need of the project and its specific outputs, including the e-platform. Overall assessment is planned to be carried out by the end of June, 2016.