

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

Please fill in and return this questionnaire to the Aarhus Convention secretariat by
20 November 2006

Secretariat: Fax: +41 22 917 0634, E-mail: michael.stanley-jones@unece.org

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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:

i. Generally available ☒ x Partly available ☐ Not available ☐

ii. Please provide internet link
<http://reports.eea.europa.eu/>, in particular
http://reports.eea.europa.eu/index_table?themeid=reporting

iii. Are reports on the state of the environment legally required to be available?
Yes ☒ x No ☐

iv. If not generally available, do you have plans to meet requirements (according to article 5, para 3) for progressive improvement in the availability of this information?
Yes ☐ No ☐

v. Comments
according to the Regulation N° 1367/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 September 2006 on the application of the provisions of the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters to Community institutions and bodies (OJ L 246, 25.09.2006) , as from 28.06.2007 (Article 4): "to be made progressively available in electronic databases that are easily accessible to the public through public telecommunication networks."

b) Texts of legislation, regulations, rules and other legally binding instruments on or relating to the environment are:

i. Generally available ☒ X Partly available ☐ Not available ☐

ii. Please provide internet link http://ec.europa.eu/environment/legis_en.htm

iii. Are texts of legislation, regulations, rules and other legally binding instruments on or relating to the environment legally required to be available? Yes ☒ X No ☐

iv. If not generally available, do you have plans to meet requirements (according to article 5, para 3) for progressive improvement in the availability of this information?
Yes ☐ No ☐

v. Comments
according to the Regulation N° 1367/2006 , Article 4 (see above)

c) Texts of policies, plans and programmes on or relating to the environment, and environmental agreements are:

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- i. Generally available ☒ Partly available ☐ Not available ☐
- ii. Please provide internet link http://ec.europa.eu/environment/index_en.htm
- iii. Are texts of policies, plans and programmes on or relating to the environment legally required to be available? Yes ☒ No ☐
- iv. If not generally available, do you have plans to meet requirements (according to article 5, para 3) for progressive improvement in the availability of this information? Yes ☐ No ☐
- v. Comments
according to the Regulation N° 1367/2006, as from 28.06.2007 (see above)

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

- i. Generally available ☐ Partly available ☒ Not available ☐
- ii. Please provide internet link <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eia/home.htm>
- iii. Are environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment documentation legally required to be available? Yes ☒ (on EU Member State level – see below)
- iv. If not generally available, do you have plans to progressively improve access to this information? Yes ☒ No ☐

v. Comments

Regulation N° 1367/2006, in its Article 4, also includes "environmental impact studies and risk assessments concerning environmental elements or a reference to the place where such information can be accessed or requested."

Under Commission internal rules, major policy proposals are to be accompanied by an impact assessment. This information is not centralized but can be found under the specific policy measures – see for instance under http://ec.europa.eu/environment/newprg/strategies_en.htm.

Furthermore, the Commission holds information received from the Member States including environmental impact assessments/strategic assessments that have been carried out in relation to specific projects/ programmes which the Commission has to evaluate. Such information would presently be available under the websites of respective Member States' administrations.

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

- i. Generally available ☐ Partly available ☒ Not available ☐
- ii. Please provide internet link See above _____

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

- i. Generally available ☒ Partly available ☐ Not available ☐
- ii. Please provide internet link <http://eper.ec.europa.eu/>
- iii. Are PRTR data 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

Ref: Regulation (EC) N° 166/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 January 2006 concerning the establishment of a European Pollutant Release and

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Transfer Register and amending Council Directives 91/689/EEC and 96/61/EC establishes an integrated pollutant release and transfer register at Community level in the form of a publicly accessible electronic database and lays down rules for its functioning, in order to implement the UN/ECE PRTR Protocol.

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

i. Generally available ☒ Partly available _____ Not available _____

ii. Please provide internet link

http://ec.europa.eu/community_law/complaints/form/index_en.htm

http://www.curia.europa.eu/en/instit/txtdocfr/index_tpi.htm

<http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/home/en/default.htm>

iii. Is information on mechanisms related to access to justice legally required to be available? Yes _____ No _____
Partly (for example, as regards access to information rights in Art. 8(1) of Regulation (EC) N° 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents, extended by Regulation N° 1367/2006 to all Community institutions and bodies)

iv. If not generally available, do you have plans to progressively improve access to this information? Yes _____ No _____

v. Comments

As part of the work for the implementation of Regulation No 1367/2006 it is envisaged *inter alia* to provide for information about mechanisms to implement this Regulation including on access to justice.

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 held in electronic form, which categories of environmental information are publicly accessible through the Internet:

NOT APPLICABLE TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, as it does not permit activities under Article 6 (this is at the EU Member States' level).

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

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

i. Generally available ☒ Partly available _____ Not available _____

ii. Please provide internet link, if applicable <http://www.eea.europa.eu/>

iii. Is such information 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

A directive creating **INSPIRE - Infrastructure for spatial information in Europe** - will be formally adopted early 2007. The EU Member States will have two years to transpose it into national law. INSPIRE will strengthen the knowledge base for environmental policy and make it more accessible to citizens, stakeholders and decision-makers. The directive will cover a very wide range of spatial data ranging from basic mapping information, such as geographical names and administrative units, to emissions, environmental quality and location of protected sites. A portal will be developed to provide a **single entry point for users to access the data**.

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Public authorities holding data covered by the directive will have to share their data with other public authorities (e.g. EU institutions). They must allow the public to view data for free and buy the data for download and use over the Internet, and must comply with technical implementing rules to improve consistency.

INSPIRE will provide **meta-data** making it easier to search for the data and to assess its quality and potential use. Detailed technical rules will be developed for a wide range of **spatial data themes** in order to make it easier for different data sets to be combined.

b) Product information that enables consumers to make informed environmental choices is:

i. Generally available ☐ Partly available ☒ Not available ☐

ii. Please provide internet link, if applicable

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/index_en.htm
<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ipp/home.htm>

iii. Are such data 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

c) Good practice information and guidelines on better environmental management are:

i. Generally available ☒ Partly available ☐ Not available ☐

ii. Please provide internet link, if applicable

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/index_en.htm

iii. Is such information 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

d) Appropriate metadata or background information so that the methods, processes and standards of data collection are transparent to future data users is:

i. Generally available ☐ Partly available ☒ Not available ☐

ii. Please provide internet link, if applicable

<http://dataservice.eea.europa.eu/dataservice/introduction.asp?refid=56B2A53C-39D3-4BB6-AD8D-6D9BEA73C220>

iii. Is such information 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

This data service is limited to the information managed by the European Environment Agency

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:

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- i. Generally available ___ Partly available ___ Not available ___
- ii. Please provide internet link, if applicable _____
- iii. Is such meta-information 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
See point 3 a): INSPIRE (Infrastructure for spatial information in Europe) will be addressing this issue

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% ___
(2005: 48% of *households* in EU-25 had internet connection)

b) In their place of work (employment, school etc.)?

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% ___

Exhaustive statistical data (from Dec 2006) available at

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-NP-06-012/EN/KS-NP-06-012-EN.PDF

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

Generally increased X 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:

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

23% of households and 63% of enterprises in EU-25 had broadband in 2005

Broadband is a term that encompasses DSL, cable and satellite high-speed Internet connections. DSL stands for "Digital Subscriber Line". Variants include ADSL, HDSL, IDSL, VDSL and SDSL.

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):

Web statistics _____

8. Please identify in the table below the

- a) main users of environmental information in your country, and
b) methods used to assess their information needs.

n.a.

You may choose one or more categories.

a) Main User	b) Methods
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Government	
Academia / Schools	
General Public	
Nongovernmental Organizations	
Private sector	
Others (Please identify)	

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

Eurobarometer survey <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/barometer/index.htm>

Environmental issue report No 13 "A new model of environmental communication for Europe from consumption to use of information", <http://reports.eea.europa.eu/92-9167-125-8/en>

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

Through our other communication materials, eg brochures; through the Europe Direct information network_____

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

European Environment Agency website, <http://www.eea.europa.eu/>

Directive creating INSPIRE (Infrastructure for spatial information in Europe) to be formally adopted early 2007 (see point 3 a)).

12. Is public access to environmental information through the Internet or other electronic means provided as a matter of practice or 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.

Regulation 1367/2006 provides for the legally enforceable right to access environmental information in general, however not specifically as a "right to access information via the internet". It does however contain the obligation to Community institutions and bodies to make the environmental information "progressively available in electronic databases that are easily accessible to the public through public telecommunication networks."

13. Has your country formulated and implemented national "e-government" strategies for the use of electronic tools to facilitate administrative processes and services, 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 timeframe for implementation.

eEurope 2005 Action Plan: http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/eeurope/2005/index_en.htm

An Action Plan called "**eGovernment i2010**" in particular was adopted by the European Commission in April 2004. It addresses five priority areas: inclusion of all citizens, efficiency, e-procurement, easy & safe access to on-line services and public participation in policy making.

Reference website: http://europa.eu.int/information_society/eeurope/i2010/index_en.htm

14. 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.

Preparation of legislation and policy initiatives, including plans and programmes relating to the environment - On-line consultations

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/consultations_en.htm or
http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/consultations/index_en.htm

The European Commission adopted, on 11 December 2002, a communication 'General principles and minimum standards for consultation of interested parties by the Commission' COM(2002)704. General principles and minimum standards apply from 1 January 2003 (http://ec.europa.eu/civil_society/consultation_standards/index_en.htm). They are now complemented, as far as 'plans and programmes relating to the environment' are concerned, by means of Regulation N° 1367/2006.

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 X
- 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:
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16. Please describe any measures taken to promote the involvement of different stakeholders representing both 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?
n.a

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?

For the purpose of this questionnaire: lack of overview on the existence of Information/metadata on methods, processes and standards of data collection and meta-information on European level

18. Does your country have an Aarhus Clearinghouse National Node web portal? If yes, please identify the website address (url): <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/aarhus/index.htm>

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 X No ___

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20. Date of launch of national node of the Clearinghouse: (Month/Year) 2002_____

21. How often does your national node administration update the National Clearinghouse web portal? Monthly ___ Quarterly X 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 X 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:

By email to aarhus.clearinghouse@unece.org X

By email to staff of the Aarhus secretariat X_

By email to national experts serving on Task Force ___

By email to Clearinghouse National Node Administrator ___

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

Other (please specify) _____

24. Please describe any measures undertaken to promote the involvement of different stakeholders representing both 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.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire!

Aarhus Convention Secretariat

Information Tools	Relevant provisions of the Aarhus Convention	Challenges & obstacles to ICT Implementation
<p>ELECTRONIC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet • E-mail • Electronic Community Notice Boards/ Billboards • CD-Rom • Electronic data accessible through bar-code scanning • Electronic data accessible through touch-tone dialling • SMS – Short Messaging System • Public electronic information kiosks • Telephone Hotlines/Fax TV Teletext • Other (to be specified) <p>NON-ELECTRONIC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brochures • Exhibitions • Green community reps • Info-shops (walk in) • Libraries • Newspapers • Open days • Posters • TV, Cinema, Radio • Other (to be specified) 	<p>ARTICLE 4, PARA. 1</p> <p>Response to requests for environmental information in the form requested</p> <p>ARTICLE 5, PARA. 3</p> <p>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.</p> <p>ARTICLE 6</p> <p>Public participation in decisions on specific activities which may have a significant effect on the environment</p> <p>ARTICLE 7</p> <p>Public participation concerning plans, programmes and policies relating to the environment</p> <p>ARTICLE 8</p> <p>Public participation during the preparation of executive regulations and/or generally applicable legally binding normative instruments</p>	<p>INSTITUTIONAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 utilizing ICT among: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Data providers (you) -Data users (pls. Quantify) • Other priorities (pls. Detail) • Lack of time to explore/implement <p>ECONOMIC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>CULTURAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited expertise/know-how <p>LEGAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclear rules, legislation on environment and informational responsibility <p>OTHER (to be specified)</p>