

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

Seventeenth meeting

Geneva, 26-28 February 2014

Item 7 of the provisional agenda:

Promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums

Promotion of the principles of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) in international forums

QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE AARHUS CONVENTION'S ALMATY GUIDELINES

Background

The aim of this questionnaire is to provide an overview of the experiences of the ECE multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) in addressing the issues covered by the Almaty Guidelines on Promoting the Application of the Principles of the Aarhus Convention in International Forums. It draws on the consultation process with international forums carried out between June 2006 and July 2007 (available at: http://www.unece.org/env/pp/ppif.html#consultation_2). ECE MEA secretariats are kindly requested to provide updates to the answers they provided during the previous consultation process by filling in the respective tables and by providing any additional information they may consider relevant.

Please note that the term “the public” is used throughout the questionnaire to mean one or more natural and legal persons, including non-governmental organizations. More specific indications of points that may be relevant to the questionnaire are provided by the Almaty Guidelines themselves, available at

<http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2005/pp/ece/ece.mp.pp.2005.2.add.5.e.pdf>

Answering the questionnaire may require selection of a limited number of elements amongst what is often a complex field of rules and practice. To support or complement your answer, please feel free to provide existing relevant documentation about your forum.

Kindly submit your responses to the questionnaire before **10 February 2014**.

Thank you for your kind cooperation!

I. RULES, PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES

Does your treaty have any rules, procedures and practices concerning access to information, public participation, and access to justice in environmental matters?

Please consult answers on your MEA to 2006 consultation process to provide the necessary updates in the narrative summary and to complete the tables below.

A. Narrative summary:

The Rules of Procedure of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) and its Protocol on Water and Health each allow the participation of observers in their meetings, including NGOs qualified or having an interest in the fields to which the Convention or the Protocol relate, provided there is no objection from one third of the Parties present at the meeting. Such observers may participate in meetings, without the right to vote. Meetings of bodies shall be held in public unless the Meeting of the Parties or the body decides otherwise.

All official documents are made freely available on the Water Convention and Protocol webpages, and most Convention / Protocol task forces and expert groups make information and reports available on the website.

Active participation of NGOs in the work under the Water Convention and its Protocol on Water and Health is a long-standing practice. Representatives of NGOs, the academic community, the private sector and interest groups participate as observers in meetings under the Convention and the Protocol and have a major role in implementing some of the activities.

The *Guide to Public Participation under the Protocol on Water and Health* was published in November 2013. The Guide offers explanations of legal obligations with regard to public participation and access to information under the Protocol and other international frameworks. It can be used as a tool to help improve the planning and carrying out of the public-participation process. The publication aims to encourage authorities to take into account the results of public participation at the different stages: in setting targets and target dates, in drawing up water-management plans and in doing the reporting. It contains recommendations and examples to support Parties and members of the public to better assert their rights and fulfil their obligations in organizing or taking part in the important public-participation process.

Under the Water Convention, *Water management: Guidance on public participation and compliance with agreements* was published in March 2000.

B. Access to information

1. Access to documents

	YES	NO	Comments
Your MEA has adopted rules of procedure dealing with access to information or has an official access to information policy (If so, please provide a link to rules of procedure or policy)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rules of procedures dealing with access to information contained in the rules of procedures for the meeting of the Parties – cf. ECE/MP.WH/2/Add.1 and ECE/MP.WAT/19/Add.1, but no specific policy about access to

	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	information
All official documents are publicly available on the website	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
All informal documents made available to Parties are publicly available on the website	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
All draft documents made available to Parties are publicly available on the website	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
All documents (official, informal and draft) are made available to “the public”, including NGOs, either at the same time as to Parties or sufficiently early	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Some documents are not publicly available, but are available upon request (If so, please specify which types of documents, and on what grounds will they be made available)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Access to documents is restricted (If so, please specify the grounds for restriction/access)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Certain documents remain confidential (If so, please specify which types of documents, and on what grounds is confidentiality asserted)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

2. Information-sharing

What methods does your MEA use to share information with, and increase the awareness of, “the public” about its processes and the issues it addresses? Please answer through the table below.

	YES	NO	Comments
Official reports of meetings under the MEA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Preparing official publications (in electronic or paper form)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Preparing unofficial publications (e.g. brochures) (in electronic or paper form)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Press releases	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	On a regular basis
Information videos	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Limited
Media interviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Side events at meetings of other instruments/processes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	And contribution to thematic sessions in international conference involving the public (ex. World Water Forum, World Water Day...)
Roundtables and workshops	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Website	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Our website but also main information spread through partners’ newsletters (WaterL, IW Learn...)
Social media	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Limited - only for the sessions of the Meetings of the Parties and National Policy Dialogues (NPDs)
Other (please specify)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Specific project to raise awareness of

			the public on the Convention and Protocol, implemented by NGOs (in 2012) Bi-monthly newsletter on NPDs Circular email sent to all points of contacts 8including NGOs)
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C. Public participation

	YES	NO	Comments
Your MEA's rules of procedure address the participation of "the public" in its processes (If so, please provide a link to rules of procedure)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rules of procedures dealing with participation of the public contained in the rules of procedures for the meeting of the Parties – cf. ECE/MP.WH/2/Add.1 at http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2007/wat/wh/ece.mp.wh.2_add_1.e.pdf and ECE/MP.WAT/19/Add.1 at http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2006/wat/ece.mp.wat.19_ADD_1_E.pdf Note, however, that different arrangements are in place for the Implementation Committee (IC – decision VI/1 in ECE/MP.WAT/37/Add.2; see at http://www.unece.org/env/water/implementation_committee.html) and Compliance Committee (CC – see at http://www.unece.org/env/water/pwh_bodies/cc.html)
Any member of "the public" can vote on any agenda item without any restrictions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Any member of "the public" can provide written comments on any agenda item without restrictions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The public cannot take part in a vote or in decision making in formal meetings of bodies under the Convention or Protocol. However, the CC explicitly allows: "Observers shall be entitled to receive copies of publicly distributed documents, submit written documents and make oral statements at meetings"
Any member of "the public" can speak on any agenda item (subject to time restraints)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Subject to the Rules of Procedure (Conduct of Business). For CC: "The Committee reserves the right to give the floor to the attending public, upon request, if it deems this useful."
Any member of "the public" can participate on any agenda item as an observer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Different rules apply to the IC and CC (please see part I-D)
Your MEA has a process of accreditation before observers are permitted to take part in its processes (If so, please outline the	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

criteria and process of accreditation and provide a link to where it is explained on your website)			
Only accredited members of “the public” can participate with voting rights	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No voting rights. No accreditation process
Only accredited observers can provide written comments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No accreditation process
Accredited members of “the public” can participate as observers but have no voting rights	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No accreditation process
Travel assistance is provided to facilitate participation of a number of members of “the public” at official meetings. If yes, which (e.g. NGOs, academia)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	NGOs and academia depending on expertise and geographical representativeness. Priority to regional NGOs over national NGOs
Accredited observers, including NGOs, can organize side events at meetings of the MEA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No accreditation process, but NGOs can and do organize side events upon request and after agreement by the Bureau
Any member of “the public”, including NGOs, can organize side events at meetings of the MEA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	See above
Stakeholder dialogues, virtual/email consultations and discussion forums are regularly held to elicit the views of “the public”, including NGOs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not on a regular basis. Before sessions of the Meetings of the Parties, if funds allow, NGO coordination organized by an NGO, resulting in NGO statements (see for example the NGO statement for the Protocol’s MOP3: http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2013/wat/MOP3-PWH/statements/Panel_MAMA86_Tvietskova.pdf) UNECE also supported the global Post-2015 Water Thematic Consultation (http://www.unece.org/post_2015_water_consultation.html)
“The public”, including NGOs, is invited to, and do, take an active role in supporting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	NGOs have a key role in implementing the programmes of work under the Convention and the Protocol. At the national level, NGOs are contracted to coordinate the implementation of national activities (in particular under the National Policy Dialogues). Under the Protocol,

implementation of the MEA's programme of work			NGOs are co-leading some programme areas of the programme of work.
Other (please outline any other ways in which "the public", including NGOs, is encouraged to participate in the processes and substantive work of your MEA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	"Strategic workshops" have been organized before the last sessions of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the Protocol to review past work and discuss challenges and opportunities to define the future programmes of work. Among the limited number of experts invited, many were NGOs representatives. NGOs therefore had a strategic contribution to drafting of the future programme of work.

D. Access to justice

For a useful, quick reference to assist you in answering the questions below, you may wish to check the overview prepared for the first informal network of the Chairs of compliance/implementation bodies under the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (Geneva, 25 March 2013), available at: http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/compliance/CC-40/Network_of_Chairs_meeting_Background_paper_FINAL.pdf

	YES	NO	Comments
Your MEA has a compliance mechanism (e.g. compliance committee or implementation committee)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Implementation Committee (IC) under the Convention (created in 2012) Compliance Committee (CC) under the Protocol
The compliance mechanism meets entirely in open to "the public" session	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	For IC: "The meetings of the Committee shall be held in public unless the Committee decides otherwise." "Only the members of the Committee shall take part in the preparation and adoption of any findings and measures." Further (in the core rules) "The parts of the meeting when findings and measures are prepared and adopted shall be limited to the attendance of the Committee members, subject to paragraph 10 of these rules. A meeting, or a part of a meeting, will be held in private when the Committee finds it necessary to ensure the confidentiality of information in accordance with paragraphs 32–35 of annex I." For CC: "The parts of the meeting when findings, decisions on measures or recommendations are prepared and adopted, should be limited to the participation of the Committee members, subject to paragraph 6 of these rules. A meeting, or a part of a meeting, will be held in private when the Committee finds it necessary to ensure the confidentiality of information in accordance with paragraphs 25 to 27 of the annex to decision I/2."
The compliance mechanism holds some sessions in open session	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The meetings shall be held in public unless the Committee decides otherwise. (See also answers in previous section.)

All documents submitted to/issued by the compliance body are publicly available on the website	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	IC: Discussion papers prepared by the secretariat or by members of the Committee should not be publicly available unless the Committee decides otherwise. CC: Discussion papers prepared by the joint secretariat for a meeting of the Committee are not posted on the website in advance of the meeting, but are available in the meeting room.
Some documents submitted to/issued by the compliance body are publicly available on the website (if so, please specify which types of documents)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Findings and recommendations of the Committees and related decisions of the Meeting of the Parties, are posted on the Protocol's website. Provisional agenda, meeting reports and other documents, including essential information concerning each case (a short summary of each case prepared by the joint secretariat; the text of any communication or submission; the preliminary determination on the admissibility of a communication, once transmitted to the Party concerned; other significant documentation setting out the positions of the Committee, of the Party concerned and of the submitting Party or the communicant) are publicized on the website. For the IC, it is specified that these documents are publicized on the website <u>without prejudice to the rules on confidentiality</u> .
Documents submitted to/issued by the compliance body are available to "the public" upon request (if so, please specify which types of documents, or if all documents)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Draft findings and recommendations are only made available upon request, only after they have been forwarded to the Party concerned. At the end of the commenting period, draft findings and ensuing comments are all posted on the Convention's / Protocol's website.
Accredited observers (e.g. any accredited member of "the public", including NGOs) can nominate members of the compliance body for election	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Parties nominate members of the IC and CC for election. Members serve in their personal capacity. Members can be NGOs representatives.
Any member of "the public", including NGOs can nominate members of the compliance body for election	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Any member of "the public" can trigger the compliance mechanism	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	For IC: No "trigger", but the Committee can decide to take the initiative For CC: Yes (Communications)
Any member of the public can submit information for the consideration of the compliance mechanism	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	For information gathering, the Committees shall consider any relevant information submitted to it including from the public, and may consider any other information it deems appropriate For IC: Where the Committee becomes aware of possible difficulties in the implementation by a Party of or the possible non-compliance by a Party with the Convention, including from information received from the public, it may

			request the Party concerned to provide the necessary information on the matter.
Any additional information			

II. CURRENT AND FUTURE WORK PLANS

Are there any current or future work plans of your MEA that may affect the extent of or modalities for access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters?

Please consult answers on your MEA to 2006 consultation process to provide the necessary updates in the narrative summary and to complete the tables below.

A. Narrative summary:

At its sixth session in Rome on 28-30 November 2012, the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention entrusted the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management, in consultation with the Implementation Committee, to carry out an analysis on the needs for reporting under the Convention. Such an analysis might serve as the basis for the elaboration of the scope and modalities of a reporting mechanism to be submitted for consideration and possible adoption by the Meeting of the Parties at its seventh session, which might include further consideration related to the information and involvement of the public.

In addition, specific activities implemented under the Convention contribute to stakeholders engagement in transboundary water management: through the National Policy Dialogues at the national level and through capacity building events at the regional level, for example thanks to thematic session on engaging with different stakeholders (from the political level to the general public) at the River Basin Commissions and other Joint Bodies workshop (9-10 April 2014).

At the third session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health (26-28 November 2013), the Meeting adopted a decision urging Parties to comply with the provisions related to public participation in the process of target setting, encouraging Parties to involve the public when preparing their summary reports, and inviting Parties to make use of the Guide to Public Participation under the Protocol on Water and Health adopted by the Meeting. National and regional activities to be organized during the triennium 2015-2017 will promote public participation in the implementation of the Protocol, based on the Guide to Public Participation.

B. Access to information

	Current work plan		Future work plan		Comments
	YES	NO	YES	NO	
Proposal to develop rules of procedure or information policy or other relevant decision (If so, please specify)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rules of procedures of the IC to be developed (cf part II – D below)
Proposal to develop communication strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Actions to improve management of environmental information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Obligations under both instruments but no concrete activity is planned to improve it
Proposal to revise website to improve public access to information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not specified in the work plan but efforts made by the secretariat to facilitate access to information on the website
Review of treaty provisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

relating to access to information (If so, please specify)					
Other plans to increase public access to information (If so, please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Other plans to reduce public access to information (If so, please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

C. Public participation

		Current work plan		Future work plan		Comments
		YES	NO	YES	NO	
Plans to increase public participation in the processes and substantive work of your MEA (If so, please specify)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Plans to reduce public participation in the processes and substantive work of your MEA (If so, please specify)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Review of treaty provisions concerning public participation		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Review of accreditation rules		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Review of rules of procedure or other relevant decision concerning role of observers		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Measures to increase participation of:	Environmental NGOs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Marginalised or vulnerable groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Women	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Youth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Indigenous peoples	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Business	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	New activity in the programme of work 2015-2017 of the Protocol on safe and efficient water management, aiming to further involve private sector in activities implemented under the Protocol
	Other groups (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Plans to introduce financial support for public to participate in MEA processes		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Already introduced
Other plans to increase public participation (please specify)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Other plans to reduce public participation (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
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D. Access to justice

	Current work plan		Future work plan		Comments
	YES	NO	YES	NO	
Review of rules/modus operandi of compliance procedure to increase access to information/public participation in the compliance procedure (If so, please specify)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	For IC: The MOP decided that the activities of the Implementation Committee shall be governed by the core rules of procedure set out in annex II to decision VI/2 until the adoption by the Meeting of the Parties, at its next session or at a following session thereafter, of the rules of procedure of the Committee, upon a proposal by the Committee.
Review of rules/modus operandi of compliance procedure to reduce access to information/public participation in the compliance procedure (If so, please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

III. CHALLENGES

In particular, what kind of challenges, if any, has your MEA encountered with regard to access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters (for example, low interest from “the public”, or practical difficulties in managing public participation)? Please provide any additional comments that you think might be useful for Aarhus Convention Parties to bear in mind when considering how to implement their obligation to promote public participation in international forums .

Please consult answers on your MEA to 2006 consultation process to provide the necessary updates in the narrative summary and to complete the tables below.

A. Narrative summary:

The financial support of participation by NGOs in meetings is limited by the availability of funds; only a limited number of NGOs can participate and many requests for financial support have to be rejected because of a lack of funds.

Despite the interest of NGOs to become more active in the promotion of the two instruments, limited funds do not allow for the implementation of further NGOs’ awareness raising project. Such awareness raising campaign would be needed, in particular with the opening of the Convention to all United Nations Member States: NGOs from other region do not know the Convention and are not aware of the potential supporting role.

Despite the possibility for the public to submit a communication to the Compliance Committee, no communication has been received so far. The lack of funds and secretariat resources to support the Compliance Committee also limits the number of meetings held each year.

B. Challenges regarding access to information

	YES	NO	Comments
Limited interest from members of “the public”, including NGOs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Many requests received from NGOs interested to be involved in activities
Lack of political will by Parties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Parties perhaps do not perceive any particular challenges.
Public access to information is a lower priority issue for Parties	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Perhaps, but also that no particular challenges
No rules or policy concerning access to information in place	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No clear rules but obligations related to public information clearly detailed in the Guide to Implementing the Water Convention (revised in 2013)
Parties have concerns regarding public disclosure of information (Please specify e.g. confidential business information, national security etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Article 9(5) of the Protocol addresses confidentiality of information. There is not a similar provision in the Convention.
Language barriers (Please specify regarding which languages)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Limited resources to translate documents	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Low levels of internet access	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Low literacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Lack of infrastructure for data generation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Lack of infrastructure for data analysis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Lack of infrastructure for data dissemination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Other challenges (please specify)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Limited staff resources to disseminate information.

C. Challenges regarding public participation

	YES	NO	Comments
Limited interest from “the public”, including NGOs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Lack of political will by Parties	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Public participation is a lower priority issue for Parties	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
No rules or procedures in place regarding public participation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No clear rules but recommendations in the Guide to Public Participation under the Protocol
Lack of clarity of rules or procedures on public participation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Clarified but not always known or implemented
Level of interest from members of “the public”, including NGOs, too high to manage effectively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Limited capacities of members of “the public”, including NGOs, to participate effectively (If so,	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

please specify in which respects)			
Reconciling perspectives of various stakeholders is difficult	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Language barriers prevent effective participation (Please specify regarding which languages)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Concerns regarding public disclosure of confidential or sensitive information if “the public”, including NGOs, were to participate in meetings etc. (Please specify what types of confidential information, e.g. for national security, confidential business information etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Risk of disruptive public participation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Limited financial resources to ensure wide public participation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Difficulties in identifying the public concerned	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NGOs having interest in the water and health management have long been involved in the work under the 2 instruments
Difficulties in verifying whether members of “the public”, including NGOs, actually represent the public concerned	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Difficulties in facilitating participation of marginalized or special interest groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No focus on marginalized groups
Insufficient timeframes in meetings to enable effective public participation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Outcomes of public participation often not taken into account in decision-making under the MEA	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Limited staff resources to prepare and disseminate materials describing the opportunities for participation.

D. Challenges regarding public participation in compliance review

	YES	NO	Comments
No legal basis for public participation in compliance review	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Lack of political will from Parties to promote public participation in compliance review	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Perhaps. In case of CC, inadequate resources to hold sufficient meetings and to promote the compliance mechanism.
Limited interest of “the public”, including NGOs, to be involved in compliance review	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Lack of public awareness of opportunities to be involved in compliance review	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
“The public”, including NGOs, lacks capacity to be involved in compliance review	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown
Limited financial resources to involve “the public”, including NGOs, in compliance review	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No request received so far, but no financial resource would be available if we receive a request

Other (please specify)			
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IV. COMMENTS

Please consult answers on your MEA to the 2006 consultation process and provide any comments on the Almaty Guidelines, in view of your treaty's own processes, activities and particular characteristics: