

Let's Make the First Step

Vision Towards Future, Kosovo (Territory under Interim UN Administration), Shtime

Project Background

The local government of Shtime has provided NGO Vision Towards Future (VDA) with a unique opportunity – they have agreed to participate in the drafting of a local regulation which would enshrine public participation in environmental decision-making which would fulfill Article 7 of the Aarhus Convention. As such, VDA will facilitate a public participation process in the development of a Draft Regulation, which they will encourage the Local Assembly to adopt, and – once adopted – continue to engage in public outreach to outline the new role for the public in the Municipality of Shtime.

Goals and Overall Objectives

- **Drafting A Regulation On Public Participation In Environmental Decision-Making**
Given the participation of local authorities, VDA's job will be to facilitate the drafting of the regulation through various means including public awareness raising, workshops, debates, and networking between stakeholders
- **Ensuring The Draft Regulation Uses Public Participation**
The means mentioned above will ensure that the Draft Regulation is a model of public participation, with lessons that can be learned in future public participation processes.
- **Ensuring The Regulation's Adoption And Continued Use**
Once the Assembly has adopted the document, VDA must ensure local authorities abide by it. As well, VDA must ensure the public is well informed of their right to participate in further decision-making.

How to Get There – Specific Activities

- **Raising Public Awareness Of Aarhus Convention/Media Campaign**
Through a one-day workshop and the formulation of a working group, VDA will facilitate the development of information in the form of leaflets and brochures which will outline the basic tenets of the Aarhus Convention. Similar information in the form of an extracted summary will be distributed to the public, relevant NGOs, and the local government. The media will also be made aware of the summary and its connection to the larger project.

- **Drafting A Regulation And Holding A Public Debate**
Through a series of working group meetings, a Draft Regulation will be published and then presented to the public in an open debate. Feedback will be collected, resulting in a final meeting and the redrafting of the Regulation.
- **Presenting The Final Draft To The Assembly**
With the final draft in hand, VDA will present the Proposed Regulation on public participation to the local Assembly, the members of which will be encouraged to adopt it.
- **Training Officials And Other Stakeholders On The Regulation's Implementation**
After the approval of the Regulation, local officials will be trained on how to incorporate it into their administrative routines. As well, a one day training will be held in which Municipal Officials, NGO representatives, and other target groups will be briefed on the Regulation and how to participate accordingly in it's continued implementation.

Outcomes

Through the participation of all stakeholders, VDA will facilitate the translation of Article 7 of the Aarhus Convention into practice. This will increase communication between all stakeholders, increase transparency in decision-making, and safeguard the environment by taking all stakeholders' interests into account. What is more, it will serve as a model case for the implementation of one aspect of the Aarhus Convention, with the hope that other municipalities will follow suit.