

Strengthening Public Participation in Waste Management in Greece

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Public participation :

What does it mean?

Involvement of the public in environmental policy making & implementation

Three approaches to public participation:

- Access to information / information dissemination
- Submission of comments
- Active participation - consultation

Public Participation Benefits

- “There is no denial that public participation *can* contribute to deliver effective, legitimate and efficient environmental policies in a multi-level context. However, we need to better understand which contextual or process factors make best-practice cases good enough in order to successfully learn from them.”

Newig & Fritch, 2009 “Environmental Governance: Participatory, Multi - Level – and Effective?”. *Environmental Policy and Governance* 19, 197-214



Public Participation (PP) in Greece

PP in Greece: The reality ...

Process

- “Public communication” / absence of two-way communication (at best: ad-hoc public participation)
- Corporatist (not participatory) governance style
- Involvement of local stakeholders but not local community
- Limited institutional forms for participation (e.g. website)

Context

- Mistrust between authorities and local residents
- Underestimation of local people’s knowledge and perceptions
- General lack of participation culture

- Management of Natura 2000 sites (Apostolopoulou, Drakou & Pediaditi, 2012): unclear roles in the process; power laden participation processes / clientelism

Good examples in Greece: Anthemountas River Basin

- Forum for social dialogue
- Consultation Committee
 - Goal: collaborative development of policy; Open meetings; Participants decided by 2nd Forum meeting
- Work groups
- Meetings with schools, farmers' cooperatives, Municipal Councils, local decision makers
- Goals / criteria for success:
wide public participation, free access to information;
agreement on goal of consultation; commitment for
implementation of agreed policy; collaboration and trust;
reliability of participants; transparency of process

Good examples in Greece:

Evrotas River Basin

- Forums / public meetings (information, exchange of opinions)
- Visits to municipalities / meeting with Municipal Councils
- Questionnaires to wider public
- Schools / environmental education
- Specific people in Prefecture committed to the project
- Collaboration of 2 levels of government (local and prefecture)
- Inclusion of experts as facilitators
- Observatory for implementation of management plan



Public Participation (PP) in Waste Management in Greece

Waste Management – Characteristics

- Embraces different decision making types (i.e. legislative, strategic, individual)
- Highly politicized (conflicting interests at all levels)
- Technically complicated
- Policy with a longer time frame
- Issue: an “environmental burden” (as perceived)

EU Legislative Framework

Aarhus Convention

Public Participation Directive (2003/35/EC), Access to environmental information (2003/4/EC), White Paper on governance (2001)

- Principles: openness/transparency, participation, accountability & clear roles, effectiveness, coherence (in policies)
- Rights to the public:
 - Participation early through effective opportunities
 - Public entitled to express comments and opinions
 - Reasonable time-frames provided at every step

Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC)

- Opportunity to participate at waste management plans & prevention programs and access to them
- Plans/programs placed on a publicly available website

Greek Legislative Framework

N4048/2012 (Regulatory Consultation)

- Objective: timely information / dissemination
- Via the website www.opengov.gr
- 2 phases (1st for goal and expected results: >2 weeks;
2nd comments by article: >3 weeks)

The process

Waste Management – The case of Peloponnese

- Determination of “object” as a whole: “Integrated Waste Management for the Region of Peloponnese” – no consultation – exclusion of the public and municipalities from the planning process
- No consultation on the selection of the sites for the treatment facilities.
- Poor dissemination of information - only electronic consultation

The context

- Limited culture of participation
- Lack of long-term planning
- Public mistrust due to :
 - ineffective operation of existing facilities
 - the well embraced public perception that authorities serve private interests rather than concern for public good
- Different levels of government not communicating effectively
- Clientelism

Suggestions for stronger public participation in waste management

- Process: transparent, including all levels of government, from early stages (policy design) and commitment to results
- Focus on long term perspective and benefits
- Multi-method approach (including: web, forums, presentations, education, face-to-face, questionnaires, Consultation Committee ...)
- Conflict resolution experts
- Workshops etc. to cultivate culture of participation: in different levels of government, schools etc.
- Show-case good examples



Thank you for your attention!