

# **Internet as a tool in participatory processes**

**critical issues based on practical experiences**

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## WFD – article 14

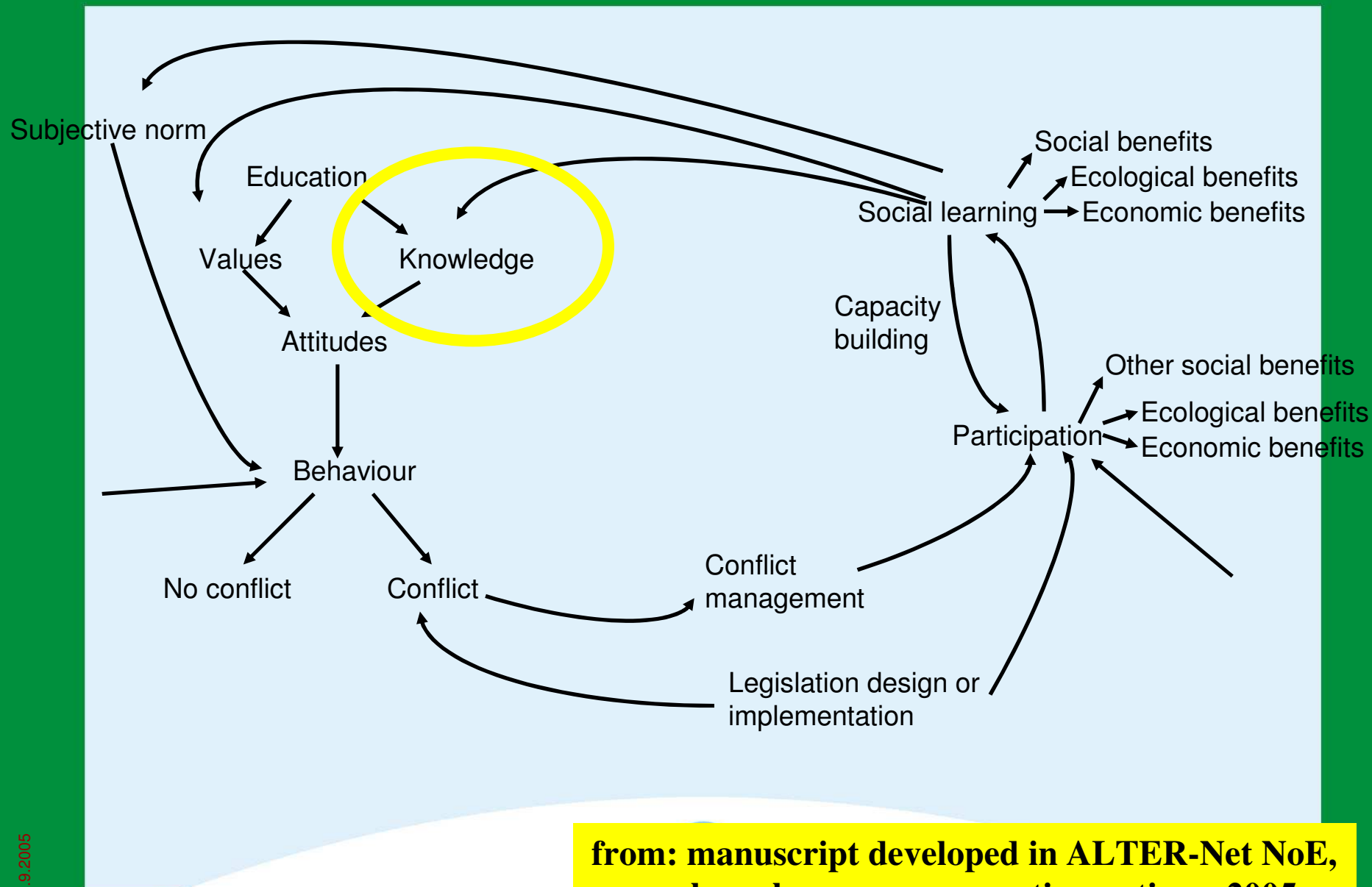
- § **Member States shall encourage the active involvement of all interested parties in the implementation of this Directive, in particular in the production, review and updating of the river basin management plans**
- § **Member states shall ensure that, for each river basin district, they publish and make available for comments to the public**

# success on the various levels

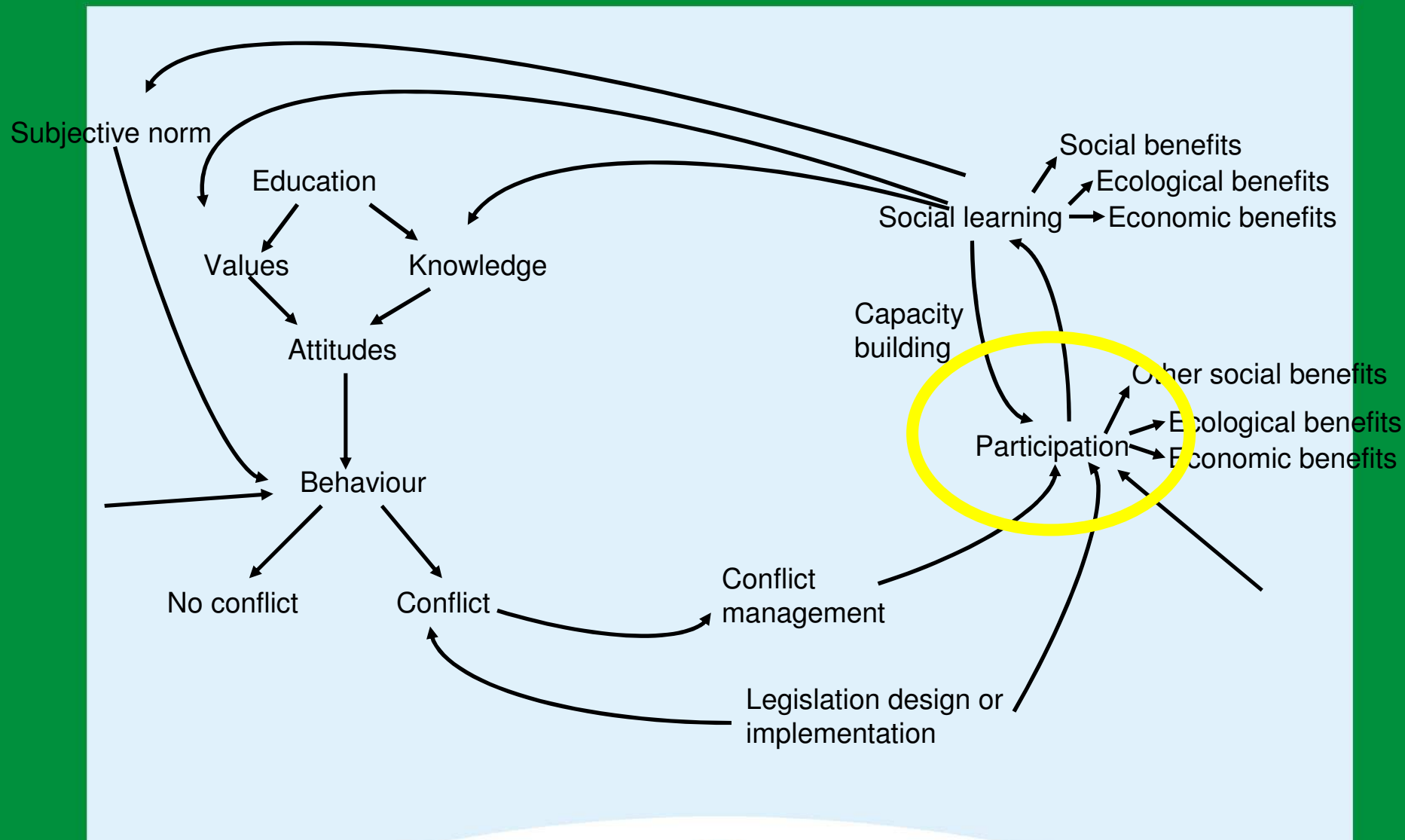
WPD – the directive, national implementation strategy

local level management plan

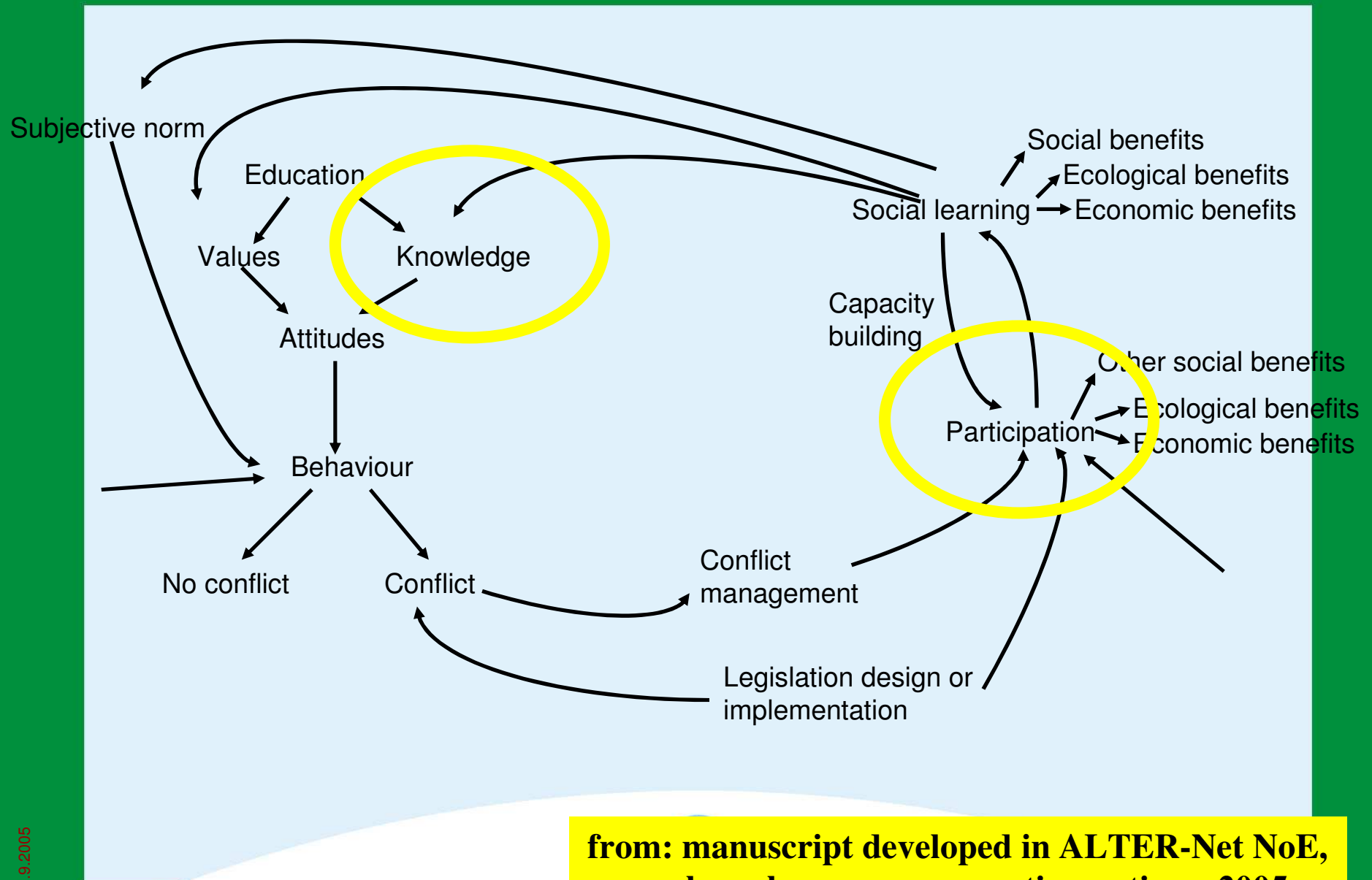
practical application of the management plan



**from: manuscript developed in ALTER-Net NoE,  
work package on consrvation options, 2005**



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# Broad environmental policy processes

- § **grown exponentially**
- § **ever more parties involved**
- § **participation has become an essential part**
- § **eco-efficiency required**
  - **environmental reasons**
  - **efficiency of public sector put into question**
  - **stakeholders have limited resources to participate**

## WFD – article 14

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- § **Member states shall ensure that, for each river basin district, they publish and make available for comments to the public**

# Waterscetch WP1

- § **develop Guidelines on the practical implementation of public participation in river basin management**
  - **participation within the group and with the stakeholders**

# GOALS – TWO PERSPECTIVES

§ GOALS FOR PARTICIPATION

§ GOALS FOR USING INTERNET

# GOALS FOR PARTICIPATION

(...Sofia guidelines, Århus convention...)

**1. INFORMATION IS EASILY ACCESSED**

**2. CONSULTATION PROCESSES ARE PROVIDED**

# **GOALS OF USING INTERNET**

**3. INFORMATION GETS DISTRIBUTED**

**4. COMMENTS ARE RECEIVED**

**5. GROUND FOR CONSENSUS BUILDING IS REACHED**



**ACTIONS:**

**THREE PROCESSES**



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# Arctic EIA guidelines

## § forum:

- Arctic environmental protection strategy (1991), later Arctic Council (1996); a political forum for 8 Arctic countries and 3 indigenous organisations; Finland as lead country, Finnish Environment Institute manages

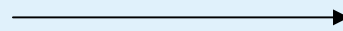
## § mandate:

- To develop regional guidance on environmental impact assessment that takes into account the unique characteristics of the Arctic circumstances

# Process

## § 1994

- idea brought up



officials only

## § 1995

- Discussion paper



widely distributed on paper

## § 1996

- September: Workshop in Rovaniemi, >30 participants from all relevant stakeholders
- October: 1st draft



broad invitation

## • 1997

- February: 2nd draft
- April: drafting group meeting
- May: electronic drafting procedure
- June: ministers accept

# Process

## § 1994

- idea brought up

## § 1995

- Discussion paper

## § 1996

- September: Workshop in Rovaniemi, >30 participants from all relevant stakeholders
- October: 1st draft →

- in WWW: comments invited
- advertised through articles/presentations
- comments from individual persons, organisations, country representatives, WWF: published their comments
- also interviews

## • 1997

- February: 2nd draft →
- April: drafting group meeting
- May: electronic drafting procedure
- June: ministers accept

- comments taken into account
- in WWW
- comments invited only from drafting group

# Process

## § 1994

- idea brought up

## § 1995

- Discussion paper

## § 1996

- September: Workshop in Rovaniemi, >30 participants from all relevant stakeholders
- October: 1st draft

## • 1997

- February: 2nd draft
- April: drafting group meeting
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physical meeting,  
1 participant from each  
country and organisation,

physical meeting,  
outcomes in the WWW



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meeting took place in 2 day intervals,  
between drafting group members

# Practical implementation of transboundary EIA convention

## § forum:

- UNECE environment, working group on EIA; representatives from countries that are parties or consider to join the convention (40-45); Finland, Sweden and Holland as lead countries, Finnish Environment Institute manages

## § mandate:

- Production of Guidance on Good Practice and on Bilateral or Multilateral Agreements concerning the ECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context.

# Process 1999-2004



video-meeting,  
email drafting

website, electronic  
drafts and  
material, workshops

website, process  
and drafts accessible,

project team

UNECE community=  
national representatives  
and secretariat

broader EIA  
community



# Public participation in environmental issues in the ASEM countries

## § forum:

- Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), informal political body between EC, 15 EU countries and 10 Asian countries; lead by Asia-Europe Environmental Technology Centre (AEETC), co-managed by Thailand Environment Institute and Finnish Environment Institute

## § mandate:

- to undertake studies on policy and practice, build a network and support the political process in enhancing public participation in environmental issues in the ASEM countries

# Process

- § lasted from 2000 to 2002
- § website
- § events: 3 workshops and 1 conference; participation in meetings of officials and ministers
- § the project group had members from Finland and Thailand
- § the advisory group consisted of representatives from China, Finland, Korea, Thailand, UK and Vietnam
- § the target audience was the political process but also experts, interest groups, private sector and the public in 15 European and 10 Asian countries

## building a network:

- § website served from the start to the end
- § four events: workshops in Hong Kong (ab. 30), Peking (80) and Hanoi (ab. 30); conference in Bangkok (400)

## guiding principles:

- § political process with drafts to officials and ministers
- § January 2001 draft on the web, comments invited from anyone, received by experts and interest groups
- § presentations on versions in workshops and conferences; available on the web

## studies on legislation and practices:

- § questionnaires used by TEI and SYKE for all 25 countries; respondent contacted, questionnaires sent, filled in and returned either electronically or through a phone discussion
- § drafts circulated with respondents by email
- § final report distributed through the website + as a printed version



# EVALUATING THE GOALS



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# Evaluating successes and failures:

**FINDING  
OUT  
THE  
GOALS**

**FINDING  
OUT  
THE  
ACTIONS**

# Evaluating successes and failures:

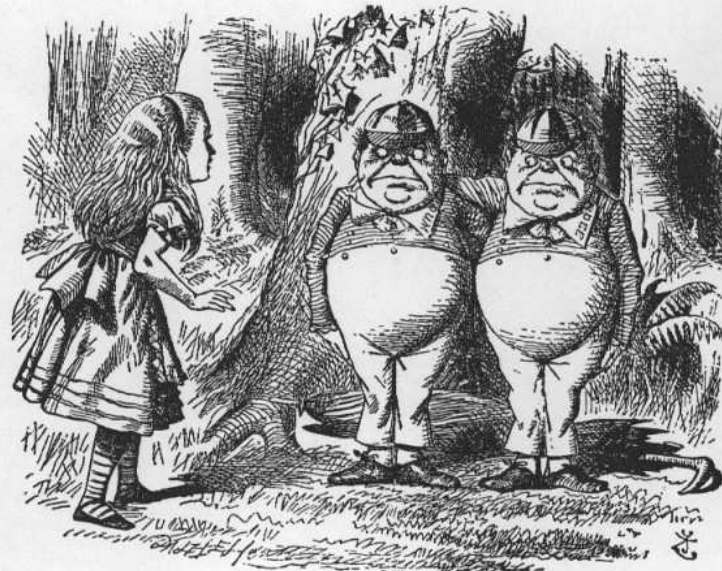
**1. FINDING  
OUT  
THE  
GOALS**

**2. FINDING  
OUT  
THE  
ACTIONS**



**3. COMPARING THE TWO**

(Mickwitz, P, 2003)



# GOALS

- § GOALS OF PARTICIPATION
- § GOALS OF USING INTERNET



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## 1. INFORMATION IS EASILY ACCESSED; high awareness and trust towards the process, continuity

- the Arctic: website reached broad audience, but certain indigenous groups may have been left outside due to internet use
- the UNECE: website existed, but not advertised much outside the UNECE community
- the ASEM: website provided mandatory but also supportive material; lead to broad networking

electronic distribution is a necessary tool in broad processes; however, it requires promoting and continuity

## 2. CONSULTATION PROCESSES ARE PROVIDED; comments invited and taken into consideration

- **the Arctic:** anyone could give comments for consideration; electronic drafting gave the opportunity to consult colleagues throughout the process and saved money and jet lag
- **the UNECE:** parties could give comments for consideration, but also outsiders did enter the process and got involved; time schedule and numbers of drafts caused problems, video-meetings saved resources
- **the ASEM:** use of electronic questionnaire lead to a broad comparative dataset, website invited 400 people to conference

electronic means help stakeholders from various countries to take part, but require strict rules; existing networks or physical meetings help to get started

### 3. INFORMATION GETS DISTRIBUTED; reactions, visibility?

- the Arctic: 100 people got involved; the work was noted actively in Arctic environment media and political process, a permanent website is established
- the UNECE: the website served the parties but also other stakeholders found it; project website transferred to UNECE website
- the ASEM: website spread the information well in Asia; reaches 400 people to come to conference; no official continuation of networking after the process

suits well for  
broad processes, but innovative promoting needed

## 4. COMMENTS ARE RECEIVED; variation and broadness of reactions

- the Arctic: comments given by administration, experts and interest groups incl. indigenous groups and WWF; variation in technical terms
- the UNECE: comments given by administration and by development consults; variation in the level of formality
- the ASEM: comments received from NGOs, Environment Law Institute and administration; variation in the level of participation and money

§

the website needs to define the rules of the process;  
who gives, when, how considered, how progresses; extra promoting helps

## 5. GROUND FOR CONSENSUS BUILDING IS REACHED; stakeholders "hear" each other, consensus gained?

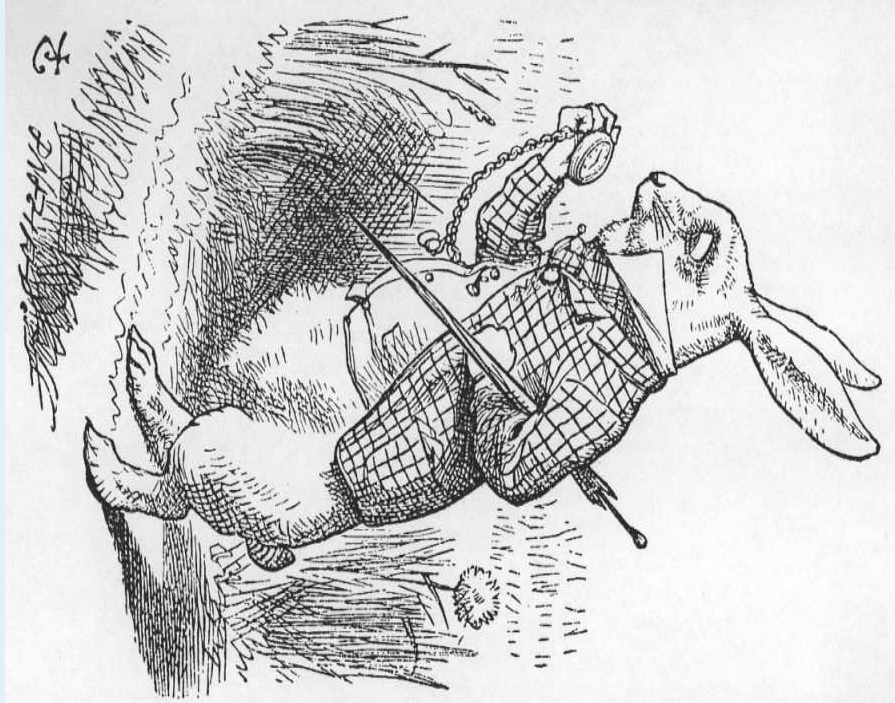
- the Arctic: a combination of physical and electronic drafting helped in understanding difficult issues
- the UNECE: transparency of dealing with comments (track changes) helped in consensus reaching
- the ASEM: electronic communication supported understanding between researcher and respondent, and within project team, but other issues dominated the political process and thus did not help in that

electronic processes help to reach consensus when carried out in transparency;  
it leaves time for people to think and discuss with their colleagues;  
face to face connection prior or in the beginning builds trust;

# Conclusions

- § **broad policy making needs innovative participatory processes**
- § **good website**
  - raises awareness
  - helps the media in further distribution
  - welcomes into the process those who want to be active
  - keeps people on the track of the steps of the process
- § **e-mail and e-meetings save time and money, but require commitment from existing contacts**
  - a plan for the entire process, defined target group, right amount time allocated, language questions, dealing with technical terms
- § **clear rules essential**

29.9.2005



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