

Interreg III B project

*Coastal Sustainability as a Challenge*  
**COASTSUST**



**University of Latvia**  
**Institute for Environmental Science and Management**

## **GUIDEBOOK**

# **ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION ACTION PROGRAMME**

**Riga 2007**



**Project co-financed  
by the European  
Union**



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## **Introduction**

Sustainable coastal development is a challenge as it needs to deliver economic prosperity, population and employment while at the same time preserving existing natural values, maritl and terrestrial ecosystems, and cultural heritage. Environmental communication provides valuable contribution in achieving sustainable coastal development as it promotes environmental awareness, change of behavioural patterns and aims to increase public participation.

Environmental communication is seen as multistakeholder process involving information exchange, cooperation and participation and consideration of opinions of all key target groups i.e. local inhabitants, municipal and state institutions, NGOs and media, and businesses. Therefore environmental communication should be integrated in all decision making. These issues have been considered while developing coastal communication action programme guidelines for municipalities.

With the focus on coastal development, environmental communication should be considered in various levels and forms starting from awareness rising about environmental implications of consumption patterns and promote shifting to environmentally friendly behaviour, as well as integrate environmental concerns into municipal governance and ensure public participation in decision making.

Development of environmental communication action programme for coastal municipalities is a process consisting of several consecutive steps. These Guidelines go through all steps to be taken starting from the audit of existing environmental communication in a coastal municipality and SWOT analysis and finally developing well-considered communication system that should be evaluated and improved regularly. According to the Guidelines the development of action programme can be split into following steps:

1. Assessment of current environmental communication methods and praxis.
2. Defining the principles of environmental communication, identificatin of key target groups and proposing municipal declaration on environmental communication;
3. Planning of environmental communication policy and setting goals;
4. Identifying of interaction links between various subsectors of environmental communication;

5. Developing environmental communication action programme and defining the role of each target group in implementation of these actions;
6. Developing guidelines for implementation of environmental communication management system, choosing indicators and planning the monitoring, audit, review and corrective actions.

These Guidelines have been developed on the basis of case studies of Liepaja city and Roja municipality carried out by Institute for Environmental Science and Management and with cooperation of these local municipalities. The Guidelines are aimed for all municipalities as well as civil society organizations interested in improving environmental quality in coastal areas and increasing public participation.

The Guidelines offer useful suggestions and ideas that can be used while developing a coastal communication action programme. The Guidelines are aimed to improve environmental quality in coastal areas and incorporate the concept of broader involvement and support from local inhabitants.

## **Environmental communication model and approach used**

These Guidelines follow the approach of four separate sub-environments that correspond to the human lifecycle – household, educational, working and public environments. Everybody is involved or linked to some or all of them.

*Household environment* is the environment where everyone is engaged in any stage of life. While strict borders of household environment can not be made, one can usually assess the type of housing and its surrounding environment, household waste management, access to natural resources etc.

*Educational environment* involves three integrated sub-sectors i.e. formal education (general educational establishments, specialized educational establishments and organizations), informal education (libraries, media, interest groups), and professional trainings for improvement of professional skills (business, municipal and state institutions);

*Working environment* applies to working conditions at the work place, employers' environmental policy, professional knowledge etc. About one third of human life time is spent in the work therefore this environment should be safe and suitable for physical and mental health.

*Public environment* also affects everyone without regard to age, education or employment. The public environment can be divided in such sectors as urban and rural environment, natural environment, cultural environment and heritage.

The Guidelines are based on the environmental communication model where five key target groups are used. Following the Guidelines the analysis, planning of policy and programming of actions should focus on five target groups whereas including a dominant target group from each of the sub-environmental sectors and the fifth target group is named as 'mediators' including media, NGOs and science that act as mediators between those four. Thus in household environment the dominant target group is local inhabitants; in education environment – formal and informal educational establishments; in working environment – state, municipal and private companies and institutions; in public environment – municipality respectively.

## **1. Assessment of state of environmental communication in a coastal municipality**

Prior to development of coastal communication action plan, the assessment of existing environmental communication system or audit needs to be carried out. Integrated environmental communication system is referred as organized structure and process, where systemic communication between all target groups takes place covering all sectors and using of environmental management tools. The first chapter guides through analyses of existing environmental communication (system), identification of environmental communication problems and their causes.

### ***1.1. Characteristics of coastal municipality and key values***

This chapter should provide overview of area, socioeconomic situation and key values. As regards four sub-sectors, following aspects in analysis might be examined:

- Household environment: type of housing, population, local traditions, aesthetic characterization, availability of central heating, wastewater collection, electricity provision etc.

- Educational environment: description of formal and informal educational institutions, libraries, availability of information and training materials, institutional framework and responsibilities;
- Working environment: key economic activities and key employers, environmental record of business, the quality and type of cooperation between municipality and businesses;
- Public environment: key natural resources in municipality, public infrastructure and its quality, built-up areas, recreation, cultural heritage and non-material culture (traditions);

### ***1.2. Assessment of key policy planning documents***

Further analysis requires assessment of key policy planning documents in particular municipality. This is necessary to understand what kind of political commitments already have been made and which issues are not covered yet.

### ***1.3. Description of environmental communication tools and their use***

The environmental communication tools should be analysed and their use assessed in four sectors – environmental information; environmental education; public participation; environmental awareness and environmentally friendly behaviour.

### ***1.4. SWOT analysis of environmental communication***

Following detailed evaluation of existing communication tools, the SWOT analysis of environmental communication sector can be elaborated. The SWOT analysis should be clustered according to communication sectors and four environmental sectors.

### ***1.5. Key problems in environmental communication sector***

This chapter extracts key problems that need to be dealt with in each of the sub-sectors and the challenges of environmental communication system in particular coastal municipality in general.

## **2. Environmental communication policy**

This section guides through defining of key values and policy principles for particular coastal municipality, proposing key areas of activities where municipal official make commitment to act.

### ***2.1. Key target groups and their characteristics***

This section provides overview of key target groups that are divided as priority target groups (dominant group in each of the sub-environments), mediator group and so called secondary target groups that represent here more detailed division of some of those key five target groups.

### ***2.2. Values, intentions and policy principles***

In this section the key values are to be described that need to be preserved in particular coastal municipality and define key principles that municipality wants to follow. Following that the municipality need to ensure that their policy is in line with those values and principles.

### ***2.3. Coastal municipality environmental policy declaration***

The declaration puts down key commitments that municipality is taking to improve environmental communication and demonstrates political support towards development of coastal communication policy and its implementation. As a minimum the declaration should be signed by the mayor of coastal municipality, however it is advisable that also other key officials sign it as well.

## **3. Environmental communication policy planning**

This section guides through setting of environmental communication goals and objectives, assessment of preconditions, available tools and resources for implementation of the policy and proposing of indicators for assessment of progress.

### ***3.1. Environmental communication goal and objectives***

In this chapter the measurable goal of environmental communication that is suitable for particular municipality should be defined. Similarly the sub-goals for each of the environmental communication sectors can be defined if necessary.

### ***3.2. Preconditions***

This chapter provides a list of key preconditions that need to be implemented in order to achieve environmental communication goals and reach the objectives. Among preconditions one can think of various necessities such as capacity building, particular institutional set-up, availability of information system, environmental awareness and commitment of target groups towards implementation of coastal communication programme etc.

### ***3.3. Policy tools in municipality***

The chapter reviews the key groups of available tools – institutional tools; communication tools; legal and legislation tools; economic tools; planning tools; information and education tools.

### ***3.4. Resources***

Realistic assessment of necessary resources for implementation of environmental policy implementation needs to be done, including careful assessment of the availability of existing resources and identification of missing ones. Like one can assess information resources, human resources, infrastructure, technological resources, financial means etc.

### ***3.5. List of indicators***

The selection of indicators should be attached to the environmental communication objectives and goals thus allowing indicators to be used for measuring the progress achieved towards goals. It is advisable to choose both quantitative and qualitative indicators.

## **4. Integrated content of environmental communication policy**

Successful implementation of environmental communication policy requires tight and coordinated actions between all environmental sectors as everything starts with household, then kindergarden and school, then work and last but not least every person is in some way related to public environment. Thus each of those sectors needs to be analyzed, as well as interlinkages between them.

### ***4.1. Interaction links between policy sectors***

Environmental communication requires integrated approach and therefore assessment of interactions between all sectors – household, educational, working and public – need to be identified and described here.

### ***4.2. The assessment of mutual integration and proposals***

Environmental information, education and opportunities for environmentally friendly behaviour are crucial in all sectors and stages of life. Truly integration requires that these issues become natural part of the educational system, work, household, and public space. This chapter includes proposals how to achieve it.

## 5. Proposals for environmental communication action programme activities in all sectors

This section includes description of key problems that need to be addressed. Then selection of most significant fields and activities need to be made and included in the action programme. The activities need to be split according to the key target groups.

### *5.1. Content proposals for action programme*

**The content-wise proposals should be based on objectives set forward in each of the environmental communication subsectors and each activity should be attached to the target groups. This assignment should ensure integrity between various activities.**

### *5.2. Proposed list of projects and activities*

Following the outcomes of analysis there is necessity to develop a list of proposed projects and priority activities for each of the environmental sectors that should lead to improvement of environmental communication. For the sake of clearness, these proposals should be put in the table and identify the interaction with other sectors. Separately from sectoral activities also integrative projects should be proposed that aim to bring changed in all or at least several environmental sectors.

### *5.3. Environmental communication pilot projects*

It is advisable to develop at least one pilot project for each of the environmental sector. There are not strict standarts for pilot projects, but preferably they need to be implemented in a short term and bring visible benefits thereby increasing commitment towards implementation of whole environmental communication system. The description of pilot project as a minimum should include description of the goal, content, target groups, resources and specific activities.

## 6. Integrated policy planning of environmental communication

This section proposes priority activities based on integrated assessment and offers integrated indicators for assessment of progress in the field of environmental communication applicable in particular coastal municipality.