

Interreg III B projekts

Coastal Sustainability as a Challenge
COASTSUST



University of Latvia
Institute for Environmental Science and Management

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION IN COASTAL MUNICIPALITIES

HANDBOOK

Riga 2007



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



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ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION IN COASTAL MUNICIPALITIES. HANDBOOK

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Introduction. Environmental communication – four partite cycle development

Environmental awareness being as one of the main preconditions for sustainable development, maintenance and improvement of environmental quality, in practice, for general public and for every one of us can be expressed as environmentally friendly action in any field of life, work, leisure and social activities as well as active participation in decision making processes on sustainable development. Since environmental or sustainability problem solutions are strongly correlating with level of knowledge, understanding of situation and sense of responsibility then not only politicians and environmental/municipal specialists, but everybody of us, esp. when being in local areas and confronted directly with those problems, becomes the decision-maker – taking action or staying aside.

Sociological researches also in Latvia often have shown (3;4) that public is not enough informed on different environmental issues and also the role of the state institutions and municipalities has been evaluated as quite low. Unfortunately also known information and education instruments are not always incorporated in the environmental management projects, information process is traditionally fragmented and information is located at different institutions and organisations and public does not know which establishment/institution should be addressed and what are the options for involvement in decision making process as well as there is insufficient coordination between non-governmental environmental organisations, lack of purposive and positive sustainable communication programs, what all hinders the development of effective environmental management and environmental friendly life style. Subsequently, the development of different representation forms for promotion of dialogue and seeking compromise among official institutions and various public target groups is no doubts essential and so already perceived at nowadays environmental protection development stage.

Results of the assessment of LA21 activities and also public environmental awareness development in Latvia indicate the need for an **environmental communication system and related process** development with involvement of all main actors in the field - Ministry of Environment and it's institutions, other ministries and institutions, municipalities, general public and public organisations, business organisations, mass media and educational establishments et. al. as pretty often the application of information/education principles today is complicated as the cooperation between different target groups in context of environmental policy implementation is just under development, i. a. also because of the continuing process of self-organisation of different target groups..

To encourage dialogue and development of mutual agreement process and to ensure formal and informal cooperation and environmentally friendly behaviour of inhabitants, different target groups and institutions of public administration, not only the development of normative acts and other traditional instruments, but also innovative creation of the necessary preconditions, incl. complementarity of communication components/steps and effective mechanisms of implementation are required.

Taking into account all known and again mentioned above and after testing effectiveness of new approaches elaborated during LA21 facilitation processes in Latvia environmental communication could be defined more comprehensive and extensive as traditionally used to, particularly including also action oriented part, aimed and created by “information and education flow” - public response and participation. Environmental

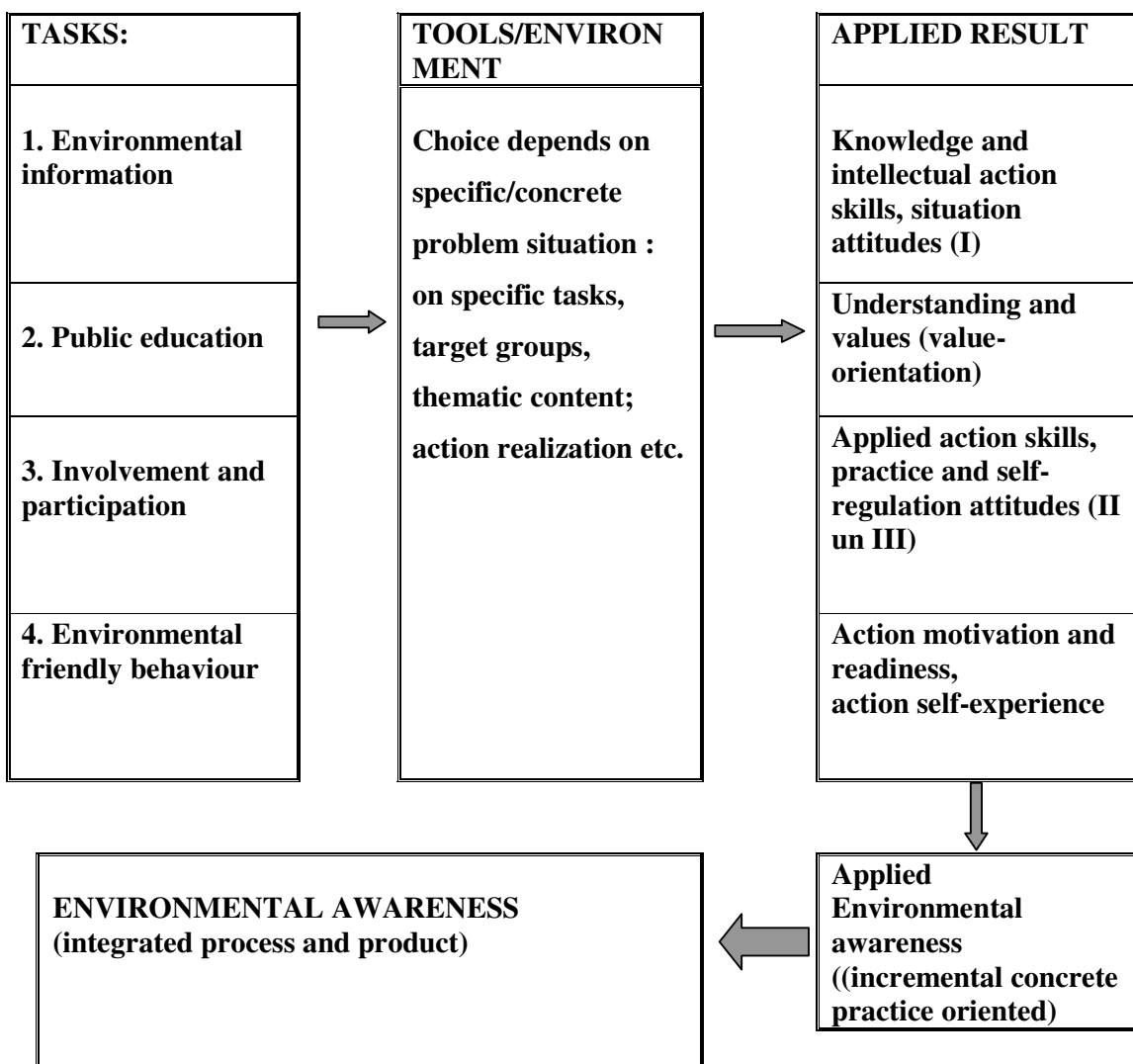
communication is then viewed as multilateral information exchange and **cooperation enhancement process** based on and including four following components:

- information and
- public education (target groups oriented),
- participation and
- environmental friendly behaviour,

being required for successful development of identification, assessment, decision making and implementation phases of environmental management.

Hereinafter we propose innovative **model of incremental environmental communication cycle (3)**. This figure (see Table 1) demonstrates the linkage between environmental communication tasks or the cyclic basic steps of communication process and pedagogical/practical results that within the particular cycle ensure applied and concrete practical case oriented environmental awareness development, but within the multi-cycle integration - the process of repeating and inter-supplementary **self-experience** development, what is facilitating general environmental awareness enhancement.

Table 1. Incremental environmental communication process – four partite cycle model

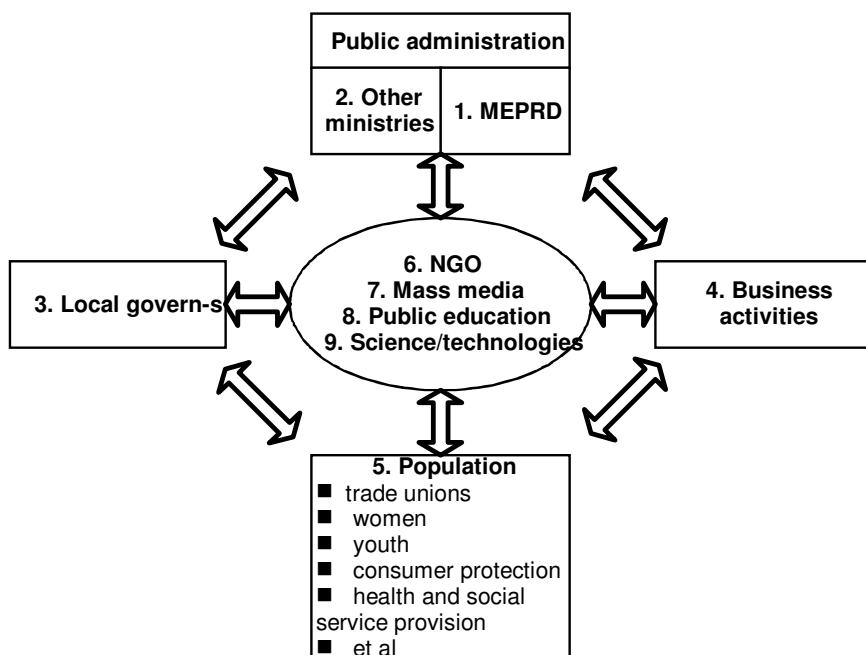


Appropriate environmental communication result have been measured as knowledge and practical skills, understanding and ability to solve environmental

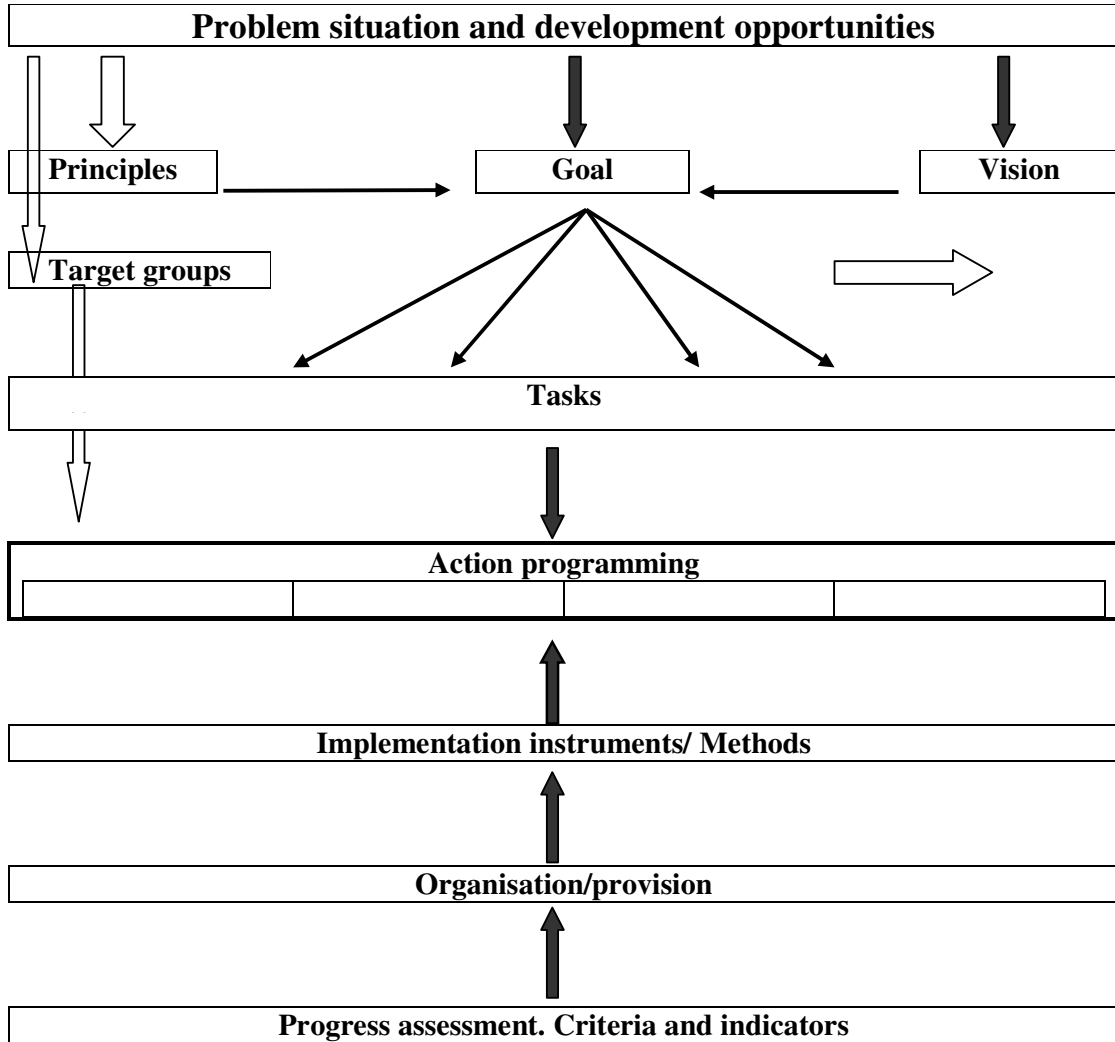
problems, up-to self-regulation attitudes, motivation and readiness for concrete action and obtained experience for case related target groups as well as each individual in general.

The four-partite incremental environmental communication cycle model demonstrates the necessity for all **four basic elements and their direct and cyclic interaction** within **environmental communication** process as identified in the definition and latter development of National Environmental communication and education strategy (4) which can be mentioned as one of the nation wide applications of this theory and practice based development.

STRATEGIC TARGET GROUPS OF ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION PROCESS



Environmental Communication: Content Structure Model



1. Environmental communication problem analysis

1.1. Environmental communication situation analysis, development perspectives assessment in coastal municipal activity sectors

1.1.1. Environmental Information Sector

Assessment of environmental information (EI) is done using diverse methods of direct interviews, data/documents and information analysis, addressing 4 traditional target groups: 1) state institutions, 2) municipality institutions 3) business and 4) society.

For assessment of EI few **criteria** are used:

- Availability of information within given institution;
- Cooperation level of institution having EI with other target groups;
- Accessibility and EI, quality and quantity
- Clearness, reliability and presentation mood
- Fee back mechanisms and applicability of EI.
-

Attention is paid to diverse channels of information and ways of presenting them in printed versions, Internet sites, municipal information centres.

1.1.2. Environmental Education (EE) Sector

Environmental education is analysed in formal and non-formal education processes, as well in professional life of state, municipal and business people.

1.1.3. Public Participation Sector

Public participation or involvement from state, municipal and business institutions is reflection of information and knowledge gained by people in communication process. Public participation shall be encouraged due to several reasons:

- Society have local specific knowledge and they have good suggestions.
- Longer discussions are better as need to change already accepted decisions
- Public discussions improve quality of decision-making and avoid opportunities for narrow interests lobbying
- Participation allows to close gap in citizen- state relations

When assessing PP in environmental communication process, it is important;

- To evaluate role of each target group from involvement and participation perspective;
- Look at quality and content of participation
- Evaluate methods, forms
- Assess feed back and results of PP.

1.1.4. Environmental friendly behaviour

Environmental friendly behaviour in daily life (work, at home, school) is reflection of internal awareness of a person created as result of being informed, having knowledge and participatory practice.

Lack of examples for “greenl behaviour in all sectors is typical phenomena. Promotion if good practices, know=how models is the task of EC process

The most effective results of environmental friendly behaviour are observed in educational (primary and secondary school) level.

1.2. Environmental Communication Target Groups Analysis

Each individual in society as well as entity are linked to some extent to environmental communication process: either as sender of information, organizer of participation etc. or as recipient and the one what takes part when being invited to environmental decision- making process.

1.2.1. Municipal institutions

Municipal institutions are different and their number depends on size of municipality and location. Usual ones are:

- Municipal administrative structures (departments, units)
- Elected deputies and committees
- Communal services entities 9 like those providing heat, water etc.0
- Educational establishments what belong to municipality
- Municipal library, museums, tourism information centres etc.

Traditional **means of communication** in municipality consists of the following set:

- Visitors center
- Municipal “hot” telephone
- Public relations unit
- Meeting of deputies, with electorate
- Visiting hours of municipal specialists
- Citizen pools etc.

1.2.2. State institutions

State institutions presence depends on location of municipality and its role in the region. In largest towns there are located regional representative offices of most governmental institutions working in environmental , health, food security, marine environment, cultural and historical monuments protection fields. Unfortunately their role and functions are so different that environmental communication is not a priority in any, and w quality of communication process depends very much on interest form staff and head of institution.

1.2.3. Business entities

Business entities are producers and users of resources, creating in any of cases environmental pressures and pollution. Their activities related to environmental communication are limited to procedural requirements, mainly in cases of EMAS process if such is introduced in enterprise. Communication with wider society is very limited and mostly reactive in cases of conflicts.

1.2.4. Mediators

In the group of mediators usually NGOs, means of public communication (radio, press, TV) are analysed.

1.2.5. Society

The largest group is society itself (municipal citizens and guests). Important task is to find common values joining people and municipality. When address properly, citizens are /may become active participants in environmental processes.

1.3. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Important tasks in environmental communication situation analysis process is to analyse documents, strategies what have impact on municipal development, and to analyse environmental component in those plans.

Latest legislation on SEA asks for preparation of Environmental Review for strategic documents, such reviews as result are produced for Spatial development plans .

In Municipal Development plan there is usually chapter about Environment, but no detailed communication components analysis, neither tasks set for future.

Other **documents** to be analysed include, for example:

- nature territories protection and management plans,
- local air quality management plan,
- municipal waste management strategy
- tourism development programme
- Youth programme etc.

1.4. Priority Environmental Communication Problems and Development Perspective

As most of problems cannot be addresses due to limited resources, it is important to select priority problems, and avoid duplication. Examples of grouping results are provided below:

State institutions

Problem	Development perspective
Lack of easily accessibly info in municipal website about state institutions	A link in municipal website to state institutions and list of institutions in grouped order
There isn't consultative mechanism created between interest groups for joint solution of environmental problems	Setting up a Consultative Board

Municipality

Problem	Development perspective
Limited tools used for environmental communication in municipality: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No clear link in website ▪ Mo announcement board for environmental events ▪ Municipal newspaper is not containing a regular information devoted to environmental topics 	Diversification and development of new tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Setting link “Environment” in website ▪ Separate Environmental Board in Visitors Center ▪ Regular Monthly Environmental Insert in local newspaper
Not existing uniform information channel containing information of services provided by municipal and tariffs	Development of Link in website of municipal containing detailed information on municipal enterprises, their services, contacts, tariffs
Municipal administration staff has limited environmental knowledge	Development of programme for deputies and
One stop agency does not have duty to provide environmental information	Extend scope of tasks for municipal One Stop Agency, including environmental communication

Enterprises (business)

Problem	Development perspective
Enterprises are not using sufficiently opportunities given to them by fact that they produce environmental sound production , use BAT	Informing public better of enterprises BAT and environmental approach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce Ecolabelling Have PR related to emphasize green activities of enterprise
Limited participation of enterprises in joint environmental communication process	Promote by means of competitions of Best Green Entrepreneur etc. activities interest and motivation . Invite to Environmental Council

Society and mediators (NGOs, Media, citizens)

Problem	Development perspective
Environmental NGO are weak in region, no financial capacity and limited fundraising skills	Organize courses of project writing Announce Competition of Environmental Projects to be financed form municipal budget
Limited interest of local media to work regularly on environmental topics and upgrade their knowledge and competences	Preparation of wide media capacity building programme, including trainings.

2. Environmental Communication Policy

2.1. Environmental Policy Declaration - Intentions, Principles, Preconditions

Municipality prepares Declaration where it announces intentions to work in concrete directions for overall improvement of environmental communication processes in community thus contributing to sustainable development in general, for example:

- In EI sector- intends to develop overall comprehensive environmental information system in municipality and improve communication with target groups
- In EE sector – intends to improve overall quality of environmental education in municipal structures, including schools, adult life long learning processes
- In PP sector- intends to create wide spectrum of realistic opportunities for citizens and any other target groups participation in environmental decision-making.
- In Environmental Friendly Behaviour Sector – intends to promote any initiative leading to better life styles and economy of resources.

Principles of environmental communication are mainly the same as sustainable environmental management principles, what include the following principles:

- Sustainable development
- Openness/ transparency
- Participatory and cooperation
- Continuity
- Individual responsibility
- Precaution
- Relevance
- Objectivity
- Complementarily
- Integrativity

As regards **preconditions**, those include:

- Integration of environmental aspects and environmental communication issues in municipal policies and planning documents;
- Willingness of society to take active part in SD processes
- Legal norms on national, international level
- Interest and motivation in municipality etc.

2.2. Environmental Communication indicators

Indicators allow to measure how targets set in Environmental Communication Action Programme are reached. Those are quantitative and qualitative, and might be very specific to assess dynamics in concrete target group.

Environmental Information Sector

Public sub-sector (incl. state and municipal institutions)

- quantitative

number of informative articles about environment

visitors of website link Environment

Number of printed materials and copies, covered topics

- qualitative

accessibility of environmental in websites and its update regularity

3. Environmental Communication Policy Planning

3.1. Policy development aspects and legislative norms

To be aware of opportunities all aspects influencing activities from Action programme shall to be identified and assessed. It is necessary to see positive and negative impacts of municipal , state and international processes shaping implementation process of the activity and its future development..

Example

Activity	Development aspects	Impacts
Mass media	Environmental issues in printed press are not sufficiently covered, lack of educational component in articles, emphasis of information only	+ society obtains environmental information - information is targeted mostly to facts statement, I snot educational
Blue Flag Movement of Beach	Municipality each year is implementing at least 5 environmental education activities based on criteria of Blue Flag	+ Environmental education covers wider circles of society

Other influencing factors:

1) Institutional aspects- participation in different networks of European Municipalities, in Union of Baltic Cities etc.

2) Presence of NGOs in municipality

3) Planning documents on national level, like:

- National Development Plan,
- Environmental Policy Plan,
- Environmental Communication and Education Strategy

4) Legislative norms

- Law on municipalities,
- Territory planning laws and sub-laws,

- Environmental Law, Law on Pollution
- Law on Information etc.

3.2. Policy goals and tasks in each of sector

Policy goals are defined to solve problems, those are supported by tasks to be performed to reach necessary results.

Goals and tasks are defined in each of communication sector and covering each of target group.

For example

Environmental Friendly Behaviour Sector

Goal (covering all target groups): increase amount of environmentally friendly behaviour cases, understanding about environmental protection and SD issues and principles in all sectors of society.

Tasks:

- 1) Public Sector – introduce principles of SD in municipal management, to integrate environmental aspects into policy planning and activate role of public and all interest groups into new life style patterns development.
- 2) Business Sector – develop and strengthen environmental sound entrepreneurial activities
- 3) Society – to educate society on environmental issues in municipal and Latvia, involve in problem solving and environmental activities.

3.3. Environmental Management Instruments in Municipal

3.3.1. Political and planning instruments

Those are on international and national level, including relevant conventions, national development plans, SD strategies,

Regional level documents and municipal strategies and action programmes

3.3.2. Legal or legislative instruments

Wide variety of documentation starting from EU directives and relevant laws in country

Municipal legal acts defining rules for construction, territory planning- use
Also Environmental Contest Guidelines in municipality

3.3.3. Economic and financial instruments

Those are budgetary means and special environmental fund money, as well as taxes and fines, money attracted by participation in projects, support form business sector to environmental activities in municipal, environmental awards etc.

3.3.4. Administrative- controlling instruments

Controlling instruments are mainly inspections carried out in cooperation with state authorized ins , like Regional Environmental Boards who control pollution permit process, Police- controlling order in forests, dune zones etc.

Administrative acts and fines are other sort of instruments in this group.

3.3.5. Education and communication instruments

Diverse means:

- Training programmes of municipal staff
- Environmental education activities in schools, kindergartens
- Cooperation with other stake-holder groups
- Informative campaigns and publishing environmental information in form of leaflets, topic brochures
- Consultation centers

3.3.6. Municipal Cooperation instruments

Municipal cooperation takes place in municipality itself and beyond its borders- as coastal municipalities association work, international activities etc.

3.3.7. Infrastructure or institutional instruments

- It includes setting up a unit dealing with Environmental Communication or at least education in municipality.
- Environmental Educators network in municipality covering NGOs, schools
- Environmental Information center in municipality

3.3.8. Technical instruments

Those are mainly instruments improving environmental performance in municipal like waste management system. Green procurement, Insulation activities of municipal houses.

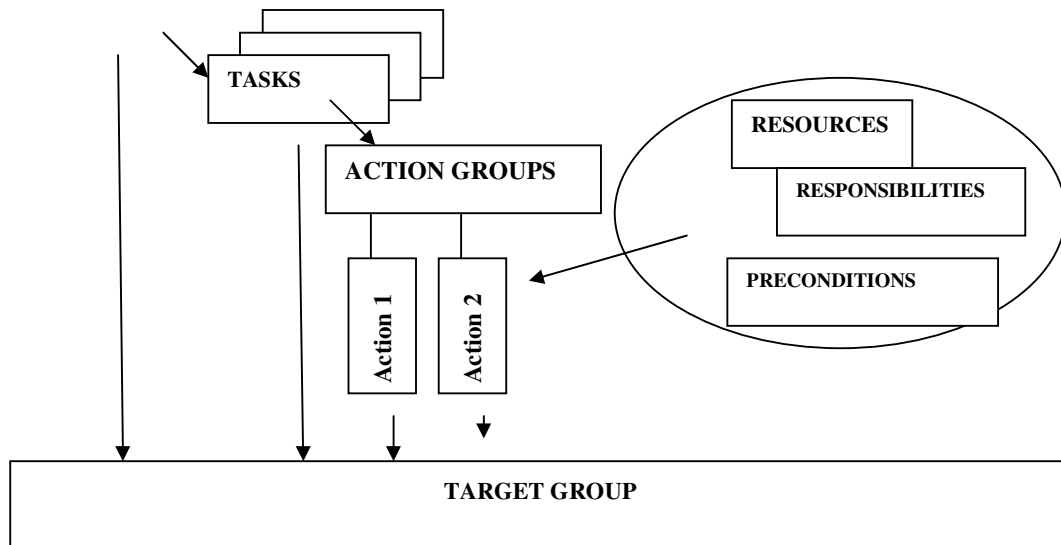
3.3.9. Environmental monitoring, statistic instruments

It is system what give beginning to information, helps to obtain, analyses data, to model processes, assess results by use of indicators etc.

4. Environmental Communication Action Programming

4.1. Action programme- tasks, action groups, implementation suggestions

This process can be shortly described as in the chart below



Example

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ACTION PROGRAMME FOR MID TERM PERIOD (3 YEARS) IN MUNICIPAL SECTOR

Goal 1: To promote environmental education as life-long learning process

Action group: Establishment of Green School in municipality

Tasks	Activity
Set up institutional structure for Green School	Allocate budget for 2 staff positions
Create opportunity for each citizen to visit lectures and activities in environmental and health protection topics	Develop Lecture course on environment and health for adult learning
Promote EE in family	Regular environmental camps for citizens

4.2. Implementation and actions- subdivision of responsibilities, information and training, control and overview

It is important to set up stable system for implementation of Environmental Communication Action programme, like set standardized procedures for how things are done, who is responsible, how checking works, how further education and training of staff takes place, and what are corrective measures for closing gaps and solving problems.

Definitely internal controlling system of implementation shall be established.

5. Integrative Action Programme

5.1. Integrative links between sectors of Action programme

Integrative character of action programme reveals links between all environmental communication sectors

Environmental Information – Environmental Education

Communication with society is more than just informing, thus for effective feedback links education is necessary. The better is understanding of environmental issues, the most optimal and targeted is use of obtained environmental information.

Environmental Information - Public Participation

Availability of environmental information, its understandability and update quality improves public involvement, helps to eliminate environmental before they become too serious.

Environmental Education – Environmental Friendly Behaviour

Environmental education is important pre-requisite to promote Environmental Friendly Behaviour, but good/gab examples of behaviour creates background for environmental information. Environmental Education allows to create motivated and informed citizens choice, starting from education in family, continuing with professional work place etc. Family has important role to establish patterns of Friendly Behaviour.

5.2. Joint Assessment of all Sectors Integration and Proposals for Integrative activities

Resulting from previous chapter more integrated look at all sectors of communication can be provided, and adequately to findings- proposals for integrative activities developed.

Better environmental communication quality in municipal is depending on links between all sectors and cooperation:

- Informative base shall be improved
- Cooperation between target groups facilitated
- Cooperation between educational establishments for increasing environmental education capacity and raise overall public environmental awareness
- Municipal shall become a good example for Environmental Friendly Behaviour
- Cooperation with media shall be developed for better public informing, education

6. Municipal Environmental Communication declaration

To summarize all intentions, define publicly goals, municipal highest political level shall be ready to prepare and adopt declaration, what in very general terms describe undertakings of municipality, in format of bullet points, thus formulating Declaration focusing on most urgent priorities in municipality.

7. Environmental Communication Action Programme – integrative content guidelines) and sustainable development indicators

The **guidelines** include general directions:

- Develop informative base for environmental data and supply with qualitative and update information all target groups
- Create model of cooperation between target groups and implement it
- Improve cooperation with educational establishments and set concrete goals for cooperation to reach all target groups in environmental communication process
- Application of innovative solutions for public participation and raising environmental awareness
- Municipal becomes example for environmental friendly behaviour
- Annual environmental preparation becomes a system in municipal documents
- Integration of environmental aspects into other municipal strategic documents

Indicators

- Accessibility of environmental information in municipal website and its updatedness
- Number of informative articles in media on environment
- Environmental activities in town and number of involved people.

For developing integrative content of Action programme for each Environmental Communication overall goal smaller goals/targets shall be defined and subtargets for each of communication sectors. Then tasks to meet those subtargets shall be developed.

Next step is activities level.

**Example
INTEGRATIVE CONTENT OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SECTOR
PROGRAMME**

<p>Environmental Communication overall goal: Educated, informed civil society, including well developed environmental management systems on all levels, what create opportunities for active participation, environment friendly behaviour and creates new models of behaviour in municipality</p>	
<p>Goal in PP sector: Development of capacity for municipal administration staff</p>	
<p>Environmental Information Goal: Ensure accessibility of environmental information about municipal and region</p>	<p>EI Tasks: By using public opinion pools clarify what environmental information is needed for society Create information system based on findings</p>
<p>Environmental Education Goal: Environmental awareness and environmental friendly behaviour</p>	<p>EE tasks: Develop comprehensive EE strategy and vision about environmental awareness of municipal citizens Organize activities for citizens where environmental improvements are interlinked with recreational and other social aspects.</p>
<p>Environmental friendly Behaviour Goals: SD in municipal and public participation in it</p>	<p>EFB tasks : Create conditions for EFBs Disseminate widely info on EFB Provide technical opportunities for citizens to be EFB (waste sorting, energy saving etc.)</p>