The project will focus on direct implementation of national legislation and on cross-sectoral policy analysis and studies. The project will also provide an opportunity for development or further development of effective public administration mechanisms, develop good practice and standard operating procedures, and help defining activities regarding the concrete and specific process of decision-making.

CAPACITY-BUILDING AND TRAINING

An analysis of capacity-building and training needs has been carried out in order to develop recommendations for a specific capacity-building and training programme both for governmental officials and NGOs within the SEE countries. This programme is part of the entire project documentation prepared in each SEE country. A specific training component was tested in Kosovo. The implementation of capacity-building and training activities started in October 2002, and include local language workshops and seminars, as well as training provided by local ministries in regard to general and specific aspects of the Aarhus Convention targeting officials and NGOs at central, regional and local levels.

EXPECTED IMPACT

Great interest has been shown in the implementation of Aarhus Convention in many of the SEE countries, thanks to the programme’s activities in Kosovo and the capacity-building and training activities in this country. NGO partners have donated their time to advise and participate in the project’s activities, especially in the Aarhus and NGO focal points. The NGO involvement has significantly influenced the project’s events and activities.

The approximate number of persons trained on capacity-building and training work shops will exceed 1,400, and will target governmental officials at central, regional and local levels, as well as parliamentarians, journalists and businessmen. The project participants will also be afforded opportunities to learn from the experiences of other European countries. The Aarhus and NGO focal points had the opportunity to attend the Aarhus Convention Training Parties, task forces and working group meetings within this project. The meetings will lead to increased governmental and NGO capacity, information dissemination and public awareness-raising activities will enable government officials to better understand and more efficiently execute their obligations regarding public access to information and participation in environmental decision-making. NGOs and other stakeholders will profit from these activities, as well, and will be more aware of their rights and the application of such rights under the Convention. The project will also complete several short-term tasks regarding training and capacity building, resulting in the production of training materials, manuals, guidelines and methodologies, that can be used in the future by the relevant governmental officials and NGOs. Information and public awareness-raising materials will include fact sheets, guides, guidelines, information and awareness raising activities will enable the public to understand their obligations relating to the Aarhus Convention.

NEXT STEPS

The effective implementation of the strategy will place in each SEE country after the project is completed, and will include measures and steps to continue implementation in the legislative and institutional frameworks, capacity-building, and awareness-raising. The benefits of the project will be felt in advance to the strategy and action plan being implemented. The implementation of the Aarhus Convention will require not only legislative changes, but also changes in the mentality and approach of both officials and NGOs. To achieve such changes, targeted and sound efforts are needed.

The sustainability of the project on the national scale will largely depend on the political will of the governmental officials and NGOs to continue implementing activities already carried out, as well as on the necessary support from the Aarhus Convention. The main concern of the project is that the Aarhus Convention and thus far have not been fully implemented in this manner, national capacity and NGOs have devoted their time to advise and participate in the project’s activities, especially in the Aarhus and NGO focal points. The NGO involvement has significantly influenced the project’s events and activities.

The projects will focus on direct implementation of national legislation and on one or more priority issues, as well as to implement the Aarhus Convention in the region. The project is expected to accelerate the process of ratification of the Aarhus Convention in these countries. The Aarhus and NGO focal points had the opportunity to attend the Aarhus Convention Training Parties, task forces and working group meetings within this project. The meetings will lead to increased governmental and NGO capacity, information dissemination and public awareness-raising activities will enable the public to understand their obligations relating to the Aarhus Convention.
Effective implementation of the Aarhus Convention may have many preconditions. One such precondition, which at the same time serves as a useful mechanism, could be the development of implementation strategies and action plans.

These strategies need to be based on a thorough assessment of needs in regard to legislative and institutional frameworks, practices, capacity-building, training, information dissemination and public awareness-raising, as well as on identification of priorities to facilitate a more efficient and sustainable implementation of the Aarhus Convention in South Eastern Europe. Within the framework of the project “Implementing the Aarhus Convention for officials, mixed stakeholders and NGOs”, a number of local workshops was conducted in order to discuss these needs. The project requires information regarding the landfill site near the Chiscani settlement in Bucharest, Romania. The project requires information regarding the landfill site near the Chiscani settlement in Bucharest, Romania.

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A network of specific NGO focal points have been selected and funded within the project to ensure direct NGO involvement in the project activities. Informed the NGOs and request feedback from them on project-related activities and interim results, and to participate in future meetings. The NGO focal points have developed their own work plan, established a network, and prepared joint meetings and consultations with them on project-related activities.

PROGRESS TO DATE

Work on developing implementation strategies has been an important pre-condition for the effective implementation of the Aarhus Convention. Several specific actions have been taken to facilitate the process.

- NGO representatives have been invited to be the members of the inter-ministerial working group and to develop an action plan in each country, and for concrete capacities at national and local level.

- NGO-focused workshops and training on the implementation of the Aarhus Convention for officials, mixed stakeholders and NGOs. The Aarhus and NGO focal points, independent experts and REC experts have been part of the expert panel and stakeholders in the decision-making process for the development of a detailed urban plan, and to establish a mechanism and practice for public participation through the development of the local level decision-making process.

- NGOs have been involved in the development of implementation strategy in many ways: to ensure wider public involvement in the design and adoption of a framework for municipal waste management strategy.

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Effective implementation of the Aarhus Convention may have many preconditions. One such precondition, which at the same time serves as a useful mechanism, could be the development of implementation strategies and action plans. These strategies need to be based on a thorough assessment of needs in regard to legislative and institutional frameworks, practices, capacity building, training, information dissemination, public awareness-raising, as well as on identification of priorities to facilitate a more efficient and successful development of capacities toward the implementation of the Aarhus Convention.

GOALS

• Ensure effective implementation of the Aarhus Convention in South Eastern Europe by facilitating transparency and participatory processes at all levels involved.
• Support capacity building of governmental and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in the countries of the region to facilitate the implementation of the Aarhus Convention.
• Develop a framework for regional and national activities that will help to ensure the effective implementation of the Aarhus Convention.

PROGRESS TO DATE

Work on developing implementation strategies and action plans has been carried out extensively in each country. Needs assessment reports have been prepared in each country, and these reports together with the gathered information on the observed needs and their causes have been used to develop a detailed implementation strategy.

OGO PILOT PROJECTS

Local pilot project grants were awarded in five countries. A total of 16 concept papers were submitted, and eight grants were selected for funding. The pilot projects will provide the effective application of the Aarhus Convention in practice, ensure effective public involvement in the decision-making process, enhance transparency and participation, and promote the regional dimension to the decision-making process. The pilot projects will focus on different aspects of the implementation of the Convention.

A COMBINATION OF REGIONAL, NATIONAL AND LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Activities include regional, national and local activities, which are part of the overall strategy for the effective implementation of the Aarhus Convention. All of the projects will focus on developing a regional framework and the combination of regional, national and local activities.

COPPIA & Aarhus Convention in South Eastern Europe

COPPIA, the European Committee on Public Participation in Impact Assessment, is a forum for the exchange of information and experiences on issues related to public participation. It normally meets on a bi-annual basis, and it is responsible for the management of resources and for the selection of projects.

Aregional Steering Committee has been set up to oversee and monitor the project’s activities and to ensure that the project is effectively implemented. The core project implementation team, which was discussed with experts and NGOs, as well as independent experts and REC experts, has been part of the project from the start.

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Effective implementation of the Aarhus Convention may have many preconditions. One such precondition, which at the same time serves as a useful mechanism, could be the development of implementation strategies and action plans.

These strategies need to be based on a thorough assessment of needs in regard to legislative and institutional frameworks, practices, capacity-building, training, information dissemination and public awareness-raising, as well as on identification of priorities to facilitate a more efficient and effective implementation of the Aarhus Convention. In the context of the Implementing Project Support for Developing Strategies for Implementation of the Aarhus Convention in South-Eastern Europe within the Regional Environmental Programme for South East Europe (REReP), for which the Netherlands Ministry for Foreign Affairs supports two projects, an initiative in April 2001 by the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) to co-operate with the ministries of environment and non-governmental organisations (MENOs) from Albania, Armenia and Bosnia, Bulgaria, Kosovo (territory under international Administration), FYR Macedonia, Romania, and Serbia and Montenegro, it will run through December 2003.

The purpose of this initiative is to develop a structure for the ongoing capacity-building for the Aarhus Convention at local level in the region, implement activities. The project's activities will be sub-divided into two categories:

1. NGO PILOT PROJECTS

- Activities by national and local level for community involvement
- NGOs responsible for, and NGOs interested in, the implementation of the Aarhus Convention

- Such activities at national level have been defined in partnership with the ministry officials for further steps towards official adoption by the end of September 2003.

- Activities at a national and local level have been defined in partnership with the ministry officials for further steps towards official adoption by the end of September 2003.

- A COMBINATION OF REGIONAL, NATIONAL AND LOCAL ACTIVITIES

- Application of the Aarhus Convention in practice, ensuring efficient public involvement in the decision-making processes
- NGOs have been invited to be members of the inter-ministerial working groups and to have direct access to discussions on interim project results and planned activities.

- NGO projects have been selected on the basis of a thorough and transparent selection procedure. The NGO focal points have developed their own work plan, established a network of national and local networks and activities.

- Local pilot project grants were awarded in five countries. A total of 81 concept papers were submitted for pilot projects, capacity-building workshops and training on the implementation of the Aarhus Convention for officials, expert mediators and NGO focal points who were selected for the project. Independent experts and REC experts have been part of the project teams.

- A national workshop was set up to review the projects activities and to discuss the implementation of the Aarhus Convention at national level for community involvement.

- Local pilot project grants were awarded in five countries. A total of 81 concept papers were submitted for pilot projects, capacity-building workshops and training on the implementation of the Aarhus Convention for officials, expert mediators and NGO focal points who were selected for the project. Independent experts and REC experts have been part of the project teams.

- A combined workshop was held. Based on the results of the workshop, the local pilot project grants were reviewed and approved by the REC committee.

- The project has been implemented by ECO-ALPEX 024, an NGO which has implemented a number of projects in the region. ECO-ALPEX 024 has had experience in implementing projects in the region and has a good reputation among local NGOs and other stakeholders.

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Effective implementation of the Aarhus Convention may have many preconditions. One such precondition, which at the same time serves as a useful mechanism, could be the development of implementation strategies and action plans. These strategies need to be based on a thorough assessment of needs in regard to legislative and institutional frameworks, practices, capacity building, training, information dissemination and public awareness-raising, as well as on identification of priorities to facilitate a more efficient and effective implementation. A combination of regional, national and local activities is required. A COMBINATION OF REGIONAL, NATIONAL AND LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Activities in a national and local level have been implemented by the Aarhus Convention official responsible for, and NGOs interested in, the implementation of the Aarhus Convention. Such activities in South Eastern Europe (SEE) have been implemented by the Regional Environmental Reconstruction Programme for South Eastern Europe (REReP), for which the Netherlands Ministry for Foreign Affairs provides support. This support includes: a Regional Environmental Management and Information Centre, a network of specific NGO focal points have been selected and funded within the project. Capacity-Building for the Aarhus Convention at Local Level in Romania, implemented by the Foundation Institute for Environment Development, and the NGO focal points have developed their own work plan, established a network of NGO focal points. NGOs have been involved in the development of implementation strategy in many ways: by creating a framework for discussion between different stakeholders. The project’s activities and results through websites, bulletins, articles, meetings and networking. Broad community involvement of Kamza in active planning and decision-making with respect to waste management. The project requires information regarding the landfill site near the Chiscani community, and will actively involve the citizens in the local decision-making process regarding the landfill.

The NGO pilot projects will promote the effective application of the Aarhus Convention in practice, ensure effective public involvement in the decision-making process for the landfill site, and to discuss future needs and proposals for activities.

NGO pilot projects

Local pilot project grants were awarded in five countries. A total of 81 concept papers were submitted, and eight grants were selected for funding. The pilot projects will promote the effective application of the Aarhus Convention in practice, ensure effective public involvement in the decision-making process for the landfill site, and to discuss future needs and proposals for activities.

1. FYR Macedonia: The pilot project will contribute to the development of policies to create conditions for the recovery of the landfill site.
2. Albania: The project will engage the communities of the municipal area of Struga in active planning and decision-making with respect to waste management.
3. Bulgaria: The project will promote the effective application of the Aarhus Convention in practice, ensure effective public involvement in the decision-making process for the landfill site, and to discuss future needs and proposals for activities.
4. Croatia: The project will promote the effective application of the Aarhus Convention in practice, ensure effective public involvement in the decision-making process for the landfill site, and to discuss future needs and proposals for activities.
5. Romania: The project will promote the effective application of the Aarhus Convention in practice, ensure effective public involvement in the decision-making process for the landfill site, and to discuss future needs and proposals for activities.
6. Serbia and Montenegro: The pilot project will contribute to the development of policies to create conditions for the recovery of the landfill site.

NGO representation

• NGO representation has been invited to be the members of the international working group for new activist ministries for further steps towards official adoption by the end of September 2003.

Implementing the Aarhus Convention in practice: NGO pilot projects in five SEE countries

• Supporting the Development of Opinion Leaders in a Rural Community by creating a framework for discussion between different stakeholders.

• Free Access to Nuclear Information — Implementing the Aarhus Convention in Romania.

• Habitat Development, Albania: The project will engage the communities of the municipal area of Struga in active planning and decision-making with respect to waste management.

• Community Participation in Waste Management, implemented by Co-Plan, Centre for Habitat Development, Albania. The project will engage the communities of the municipal area of Struga in active planning and decision-making with respect to waste management.

• Creating Sustainable Solutions for Elimination of Illegal Landfills through Implementation of the Aarhus Convention, implemented by the Regional Environmental Reconstruction Programme for South Eastern Europe (REReP), for which the Netherlands Ministry for Foreign Affairs provides support. This support includes: a Regional Environmental Management and Information Centre, a network of specific NGO focal points. NGOs have been involved in the development of implementation strategy in many ways: by creating a framework for discussion between different stakeholders.

• Implementing the Aarhus Convention in practice: NGO pilot projects in five SEE countries.
The project will focus on direct implementation of national legislation and on co-operation and exchange of experience of the SEE countries and with NGO’s in the area of public access to information and participation in decision-making. The project is expected to accelerate the process of ratification and early implementation of the Aarhus Convention in local communities.

The implementation of the Aarhus Convention will require not only legislative and institutional frameworks, practices, training, capacity-building, and awareness-raising. Many of the mechanisms, developing good practices and democratic approaches in communities, and on helping to define activities regarding the concrete and specific process of decision-making.

CAPACITY-BUILDING AND TRAINING

An analysis of capacity-building and training needs has been carried out in order to develop recommendations for a specific capacity-building and training programme both for government officials and NGOs within the region. The project will continue the implementation of capacity-building and training activities started in October 2002, and include local language workshops and seminars, as well as training provided by local universities in regard to generic and specific aspects of the Aarhus Convention targeting officials and NGOs at central, regional and local levels.

EXPECTED IMPACT

Great interest has been shown in the implementation of Aarhus Convention in many of the SEE countries, and to promote the further implementation of the Convention in SEE countries, a capacity-building and training material has been developed. These activities will provide a concrete action plan for specific steps and measures within a short time frame. If the framework of the Aarhus Convention is not in place, no serious attempts for capacity-building can be expected, which will enable the public to be informed of their rights and the application of such rights under the Convention. The project will also be crucial in this respect. The national/local initiatives should take over the capacity-building, awareness-raising activities and education, at central, regional and local levels, as well as parliamentarians, journalists and businessmen. The project participants will also be an essential source of opportunities to learn from the experiences of other European countries. The Aarhus and NGO local points had the opportunity to attend the Aarhus Convention Training Parties, task forces and working group meetings within the project, and through this gained diverse information, knowledge and experience they will be able to apply to local communities.

The approximate number of persons trained on various levels, as well as workshops that target governmental officials, NGOs, journalists and politicians, will exceed 1,400 and will target governmental officials at central, regional, and local levels, as well as parliamentarians, journalists and businessmen. The project participants will also be an essential source of opportunities to learn from the experiences of other European countries. The Aarhus and NGO local points had the opportunity to attend the Aarhus Convention Training Parties, task forces and working group meetings within the project, and through this gained diverse information, knowledge and experience they will be able to apply to local communities.

The effective implementation of the strategy will take place in each SEE country after the project is completed, and will include measures to promote the continued implementation of the legislative and institutional frameworks, capacity-building, and awareness-raising. An analysis of capacity-building and training needs has been carried out in order to develop recommendations for a specific capacity-building and training programme both for government officials and NGOs within the region. The project will continue the implementation of capacity-building and training activities started in October 2002, and include local language workshops and seminars, as well as training provided by local universities in regard to generic and specific aspects of the Aarhus Convention targeting officials and NGOs at central, regional and local levels.

THE NEXT STEPS

The implementation of the strategy will take place in each SEE country after the project is completed, and will include measures to promote the continued implementation of the legislative and institutional frameworks, capacity-building, and awareness-raising. An analysis of capacity-building and training needs has been carried out in order to develop recommendations for a specific capacity-building and training programme both for government officials and NGOs within the region. The project will continue the implementation of capacity-building and training activities started in October 2002, and include local language workshops and seminars, as well as training provided by local universities in regard to generic and specific aspects of the Aarhus Convention targeting officials and NGOs at central, regional and local levels.

The implementation of the Aarhus Convention in SEE countries requires not only legislative and institutional frameworks, practices, training, capacity-building, and awareness-raising materials will include leaflets brochures, citizen guides, electronic information, and NGO capacity. Information dissemination will be crucial in this respect. The national/local initiatives should take over the capacity-building, awareness-raising activities and education of the benefits of the project will be laid adequate to the strategy and action plan being implemented. The implementation of the Aarhus Convention will require not only legislative and institutional frameworks, practices, training, capacity-building, and awareness-raising materials will include leaflets brochures, citizen guides, electronic information, and NGO capacity. Information dissemination will be crucial in this respect. The national/local initiatives should take over the capacity-building, awareness-raising activities and education of the benefits of the project will be laid adequate to the strategy and action plan being implemented. The implementation of the Aarhus Convention in SEE countries requires not only legislative and institutional frameworks, practices, training, capacity-building, and awareness-raising. An analysis of capacity-building and training needs has been carried out in order to develop recommendations for a specific capacity-building and training programme both for government officials and NGOs within the region. The project will continue the implementation of capacity-building and training activities started in October 2002, and include local language workshops and seminars, as well as training provided by local universities in regard to generic and specific aspects of the Aarhus Convention targeting officials and NGOs at central, regional and local levels.

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The project will focus on five areas of implementation of the Aarhus Convention. These are: (i) capacity-building and training, (ii) public participation, (iii) institutional reform, (iv) information and transparency, and (v) NGO focal points.

The project will target officials and NGOs at central, regional and local levels, as well as parliamentarians, journalists and humanities. The project participants will also be offered opportunities to learn from the experiences of other European countries. The Aarhus and NGO focal points had the opportunity to attend meetings within this project, and the NGO focal points will exceed 1,000 and will be crucial in this respect. The national/local initiatives should take over the capacity-building, training/training for NGOs in some of the targeted countries, for developing and implementing training programmes, preparing and providing training materials, manuals, guidance materials and methodologies, that can be used for Central and Eastern Europe.

The project delivers a mechanism for the implementation of the Aarhus Convention to the domestic level, and through the implementation of the project, the project participants will also be able to appreciate their role in the future implementation of the Convention.

NEXT STEPS

The implementation of the project will be followed by a final Aarhus Convention, and will be continued, to enable the public to participate more efficiently in decision-making. If the project participants follow these recommendations, legislative and institutional frameworks will significantly be improved, which will enable the public to participate more efficiently in decision-making. If the parties follow these recommendations, legislative and institutional frameworks will significantly be improved, which will enable the public to participate more efficiently in decision-making.

The sustainability of the project on the national range level will mainly depend on the political will of governments to follow the recommendations, while those that are not yet partners rely heavily on this project to implement the Convention, while those that are not yet partners rely heavily on this project to implement the Convention. The sustainability of the project on the national range level will mainly depend on the political will of governments to follow the recommendations.

In addition, targeting and making an impact on the municipal level/community level is an important area for the project. The NGO focal points will result in a better-informed and more involved public in a given local context. In addition, targeting and making an impact on the municipal level/community level is an important area for the project. The NGO focal points will result in a better-informed and more involved public in a given local context.