

## **Public Participation Strategy for the near Caspian subjects of the Russian Federation**

### **Executive Summary**

The principle of the public participation in the environmental management was set down in a number of international documents, for instance the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, requirements of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development for the implementation of the Agenda 21 and decisions of the World Summit for Sustainable Development. Public participation is required under the Aarhus Convention and is relevant to the 10<sup>th</sup> principle of the Rio Declaration on environmental protection and development, as well as the UN's Millennium Goals.

The forms of international environmental collaboration in the Caspian Sea region that envisage public participation include:

- the activity of the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea (Tehran Convention);
- the implementation of the comprehensive international project the 'Caspian Environment Programme' (CEP), which supported since 1998 the development and current implementation of the Tehran Convention;
- transboundary contacts of business entities on environmental problems, including the procedures of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) on the Caspian Sea of business projects, as well as activity of various non-governmental organizations (Association of near Caspian Universities, Caspian related initiatives of the International Union for Nature Conservation (IUCN), BirdLife International, as well as Union for Birds Protection of Russia etc.), international projects and so on.

Participation of the public concerned in the Tehran Convention activity is envisaged by the Article 21 of the document.

"Public diplomacy" being one of the components for stirring up the population involvement in the development of multiple links and contacts both inside the state and within the frontier cooperation is enough new direction for the society development in the Russian Federation. It is connected with building up the notational capacity in addressing international, in particular, environmental problems, including in the most vulnerable from the biodiversity conservation point of view significant ecosystems.

The relevant informational-and-explanatory work is required to ensure the effectiveness of environmental activity and 'public diplomacy'. In its turn, to ensure the effectiveness of the Russian public participation in addressing the environmental problems the corresponding informational, coordinating and organizational support, formation of contemporary network structure of such activity, development of a constructive dialogue between society and authorities, and mass media promotion are essential.

Public participation in prevention of ecological jeopardy to the Caspian ecosystem envisages the support of environmentally responsible nature use and integrated water resources management (IWRM).

Integrated regulating (management) of water resources or IWRM (the term was determined under the Global Water Partnership) is the process, which promotes coordinated development and regulating of water, land and associated resources aimed at equally shared maximum benefit

in terms of economic and social well-being, without damage to the sustainability of the most important ecosystems. Thereby, IWRM is determined by UNEP as “3 E” (“Economic development, social Equity and Environmental sustainability”), i.e. means economic development, social equity and environmental sustainability.

IWRM implementation envisages that the areas for coordination and a number of partners are identified at each level to ensure the consistency of policy and strategic ground along with mechanism for activity implementation and feedback ensuring, intended at the UNEP measures realization and assessment of outputs achieved. It is important that these partners would include the civil society structures and environmentally oriented NGOs.

The development and introduction of the integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) methodology with the relevant public component seems the important task. The introduction of ICZM methodology would promote ensuring the environmentally sustainable coastal area development, including tasks for recreational and eco-tourism development, ecosystems conservation, combating land degradation, as well as sustainable and conditional water supply of population and economic activity.

Further strengthening of public component in the environmental protection activity in the region is line with the basic directions of the state environmental and social policy.

The Russian Federation Constitution provides the public with the right for active participation in resolution of environmental protection problems. Thus, the right to establish voluntarily public associations to protect common interests and achieve common goals, including proper ecological, is recognized as one of the major constitutional rights of the Russian citizens. The latter is *a fortiori* relevant to the constitutional charter of the state, since the right for the favourable environment is either the inherent constitutional right of the Russian Federation citizen. The Russian legislation envisages the activity of non-profit organizations (the ones that *a priori* are not aimed at commercialization as their activity goal and not sharing the profit among the participants), thereby directly implementing the constitutional right for public activity. The public associations and individual specialists (experts) to achieve goals set are implement their activity based on the principles of voluntarism, equity, self-administration, legitimacy, embeddingness in the system of legal regulating and publicity. The important form of public participation in implementation of the state environmental policy is the activity of the Chamber of Public of the Russian Federation.

The formation of the contact network of environmental public organizations, whose activity is carried out in the near-Caspian subjects of the Russian Federation, is the necessary condition for the increase of effectiveness of public participation. The identification and analysis of priorities in activity of the region’s public organizations should precede the formation of such the contact network.

The specified regularity regarding the types of organizations in any event participial to various aspects of environmentally oriented activity was identified during the formation of the network. The non-governmental organizations, whose main amount of work belongs to educational, enlightenment and informational work, should be noted here in a first turn.

Also, the organizations with activity of mostly applied nature, including informational and enlightenment directions, ‘green’ fishing, organization of litter collection at the specially protected areas, and science intensive and technologic in its nature activity, were identified.

It was disclosed that under the certain awareness of environmental risks and regional development problems, the main priorities of the public structures activity here include green fishing, environmental education and enlightenment, carrying out of studies and environmental expertise. At this, the full spectrum of the regional environmental NGOs' interests includes:

- ecological education/ enlightenment, holding of international environmental days and 'Caspian Day';
- population health;
- promotion to local population in utilization of sustainable land use technologies;
- environmentally oriented tourism, including hunting/fishing;
- restoration of popular traditions and cottage industry that promote inexhaustible nature use;
- carrying out of the relevant scientific studies and activities, including biodiversity conservation issues;
- promotion to the development and introduction of environmentally safe for the Caspian technologies;
- actions on coastal areas clean-up from litter and their improvement;
- training of 'environmental' personnel for the relevant structures connected with business, etc.;
- promotion to mass media work, including awareness on various situations;
- organization and holding of public expertise of ongoing and planned activities;
- local history, geography and culture;
- promotion to the development and operation of region's SPAs, including SPAs role in population awareness.

Thereby, the work of environmentally oriented structures of the region covers the significant number of concrete directions, at this having the crucial, clearly highlighted priorities and, in general, enough effectively assist to building the relevant capacity in the environmental protection area and implementation of the state environmental policy in the region.

The sufficiency of public structures participation in addressing the environmental problems is determined with a complex of different factors: from the significance of any problem of the region in the view of the public environmental mind, towards the availability of real funding sources for their nature protection activity. Much is depending on the experience and interaction with other parties concerned in addressing of these problems (including authorities and commercial structures).

One of the effectual and important forms of public participation in the implementation of the Tehran Convention provisions is holding of forums with participation public structures and their dedication to the Caspian Day.

One took place on August 11-12, 2008 in Astrakhan and was timed to events that honored the 450-year anniversary of the city and was dedicated to consideration among stakeholders of the revisited NCAP of CEP and its possible contribution into the implementation of the Tehran Convention, including the issues on effective public participation in the procedure of the impact assessment on the Caspian Sea marine environment in a transboundary context. Also, on the basis of the Astrakhan State Natural Biosphere Reserve (ASNBR) the discussion took place on the public support to NCAP and draft Public Participation Strategy to be included into the Tehran Convention Action Plan, as well as the trip around the Reserve's area with an accent paid to ecological problems of the Caspian Sea and the Lower Volga for public awareness and attraction of mass media attention to this problem. The materials obtained were used under the issuing of the booklet 'Public for the protection of the marine environment of the Caspian Sea',

which is dedicated to the public organizations in the near Caspian subjects of the Russian Federation. This booklet is the popularization of information for the further wide use and dissemination by public organizations mentioned in it.

The Caspian Day 2010 was dedicated to the discussion of the national mechanisms for capacity building for the Tehran Convention implementation in the context of provision of the environmental safety of socio-economic development of the near Caspian region of the Russian Federation in interaction with the Rio Convention.

The effective interaction of the parties concerned in addressing of the environmental problems of the region is the necessary condition for achieving the synergetic effect and success of such activity. Under the modern conditions the most successful from the ecological positions is the trilateral interaction of business, public and authorities. Both the public councils / chambers under the executive bodies and/or representation of the people of local and regional levels, and the patronized with the big business forums and projects could serve as the “grounds” for such partnerships. The formation of actual “grounds” for discussion of stakeholders and other forms of trilateral partnerships with mandatory involvement of scientific community should be encouraged in every possible way for promotion of the implementation of the Tehran Convention provisions, as well as addressing the concrete problems of the region.

It is necessary to elaborate the practical recommendations on the formation of partnerships, including the possible funding sources for their activity, and prepare the relevant legislative initiatives at the regional, and in perspective – at the federal levels.

The cardinal significance for the considered activity belongs to the full-fledged professional awareness of public on environmental problems of the Caspian. As the mechanisms for such awareness both the traditional publications, and the arrangement of the relevant Internet resources (sites, blogs, forums, e-conferences) could be considered.

The significant role in increasing the efficacy of public participation could be played by the organization of feedback channels for public and working bodies of the agreements under the consideration. These channels could include the relevant Internet resources, regular publications in the regional media, meetings, conferences, thematic sociological polls etc. The important role in this regards could be played the existing forms of consolidation of scientific community of the region with its matured forms for discussions, debates and publications.

In terms of increasing of social stratification of society, which hampers the formation of widespread environmentally oriented public movements and associations and results into strengthening of apathy of a part of society with respect to environmental problems, the big significance belongs to arrangement of an event with the most wide possible public participation. To this end the support and encouragement of holding the annual events dedicated to the Caspian Day is highly important.

The organization of holding, on a regular basis, of an environmental forum of concerned public, including the scientific community and represents of other stakeholders timed with the Caspian Day arrangements seems to be reasonable.

The traditional mechanism of strengthening the public support to multilateral environmental agreements is the organization of campaigns in local media related to propaganda of and ensuring of compliance with environmental legislation in the region, including the provisions of multilateral environmental agreements in question. Mass media means, including papers,

magazines, radio, television, as well as Internet and more traditional communication tubes could be used for dissemination of information on such agreements, obligations and measures envisaged by them, which could be assumed by organizations, associations and individuals.

The implementation of the Tehran Convention provisions, as any environmental activity on the Caspian region, should be grounded on the mandatory accounting of social and ethnic specificity of its population. In this regards carrying out of the relevant sociological studies and development of review of historic and cultural nature use traditions in the region seems to be very useful.

Also, the participation of public structures in the formation and discussion of results achieved in implementation of the respective components of programmes of socio-economic development of the near Caspian subjects of the Russian Federation would promote the implementation. The development, with public participation, of recommendations on economic measures for regulating of impact of particular groups of stakeholders on the environment and their consecutive regulatory execution would be useful for the tasks of formation of realistic development programmes.

The awareness and active position of local administrations and communities are critical for practical implementation of the Tehran Convention provisions at the local level. This would promote the extension of local capacity and objective evaluation of measures efficiency, taken for the Tehran Convention implementation, including the influence of environmental protection activities on the local communities.

The issues of formation of adequate environmental consciousness and active civilian attitude of the region's population, including representatives of the business and authorities, have the fundamental significance for the provision of effective implementation of the Tehran Convention provisions. Solution of this task is connected with the 'environmentalization' of education and enlightenment, mass media activity and staff training. Usually, this sort of tasks includes the formation of effective system of continuous environmental education, wide dissemination of actual information on the state of the natural environment, support to the rise of ecological/environmental culture and so on.

As the most important EIA procedure component is the public participation, than it should be foreseen to have wider involvement of public organizations and citizens into the discussion of projects of planned economic and/or other activity, objective evaluation under the consideration of possible alternative solutions, as well as preparation of recommendations to the local administrations.

### Stakeholders' participation

Stakeholders	Reason of interest	Role and obligations	Stakeholders participation methodic
Ministries of environment, fisheries, energy, etc. (federal and of the subjects of the Russian Federation)	Policy improvement. Transparency (publicity). Lack of communicative links among agencies.	Dialogue with public, coordination among ministries	Leading and coordinating role, new institutions, forums
Local administrations and district authorities	Sustainable development of the region. Implementation of the state programmes. Improvement of investment attractiveness.	intermediation, organization and legal support	Organization of seminars and consultations
Business sector	Implementation of own environmental policy Support of image of environmentally sound activity Economic effectiveness.	Donorship, EIA, dialogue	Mass media, forums. Grants, social actions. Public discussions
Local and national environmental protection organizations	Implementation of own functions Increase of quality in decisions made Energizing of civil community Increase of awareness level of local community in issues related to the Caspian environmental problems Участие в процессе принятия решений	Information provision Implementation of measures in environmental protection (mobilization), participation in planning and realization, monitoring and assessment of decisions on implementation, capacity building in education etc.	Grants, consultations and partnership in strategy implementation Us of media and Internet resources. Informational networks. Meetings and forums.
Coastal zone population	Favourable environment Active participation and mobilization	Participation in elaboration of environmental protection policy, search for information, implementation of activity with the assistsacne of the small grants	Grants, mass media, dissemination of information, , consultations and meetings

### Brief presentation of activity

Activities	Forms of civil society involvement in the Tehran Convention activity
Civil society participation in the sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the Tehran Convention	Participation of non-governmental organizations in the sessions of the Conference of the Parties as observers: attendance to the meetings and presentation of oral and written statements.
Civil society participation in the expert councils or other advisory bodies to the Convention	Involvement of representatives from the non-governmental organizations, private sector or scientific centers, which have big experience in the field of the environmental protection, as the experts.
Civil society participation in the implementation of the projects and programmes related to the activity under the Tehran Convention and other multilateral environmental agreements	International agencies have agreements with multilateral environmental agreements, under which they assist countries in the development, implementation and funding of projects. Projects often have the form of partnerships, where all parties are participating in jointly. Such partnerships provide effective means for the implementation of an agreement at the national, regional and even global levels.
Participation in the development and implementation of the Tehran Convention Action Plan and realization of other multilateral environmental agreements	Holding of discussions with major stakeholders, including the private sector, NGOs, local communities, media under the development of the National action plan on the Tehran Convention implementation. Stakeholders' participation in the implementation of the National Tehran Convention Action Plan via provision of awareness, staff training and technical assistance. Media involvement in awareness citizens on the activity under the Tehran Convention.

### General organization of activity

Activity directions	Possible concrete activities	Participating institutions	Stakeholders
Attraction of public attention to the problems of the Caspian Sea marine environment conservation	Arrangement of workshops, thematic soirées, lecture cycles, roundtables. Preparation and printing of booklets, methodic guides Actions on litter cleanup and greening Sociological polls, questioning Activity of political parties and organizations of environmental orientation Arrangement of the national network for the public support of the Tehran Convention	Public organizations of environmental orientation Institutes of higher education, student associations General educational entities Specialized educational entities Centers for environmental education Libraries Reserves Public associations of the media workers	Conference of the Parties, National Competent Authority, Tehran Convention Secretariat and other bodies Administrations Local executive bodies Coastal stripe population
Dissemination of environmental, legal and economic knowledge, building up ecological/environmental culture among youngsters.	Issuing of methodic guides, educational courses on legal, economic and environmental grounds of small private business. Use of possibilities of the nation-wide Network of public support of the Tehran Convention. Social ads on TV and in other media.	Scientific institutions in the field of ecology/environment, law, economy, sociology etc. Specialized centers Non-profit organizations Professional unions Scientific communities Environmental protection societies Fraternities, scholar-hoods and toddler organizations	Administration Local executive bodies Coastal stripe population Youth Representatives of small business and sole proprietors
Scientific research activity	Organization and implementation of scientific research and applied works on various thematic directions of nature protection Participation in organization of the trips, expeditions and studies; Services related to environmental/ecological certification and accreditation. Conservation and study of flora and fauna gene pool, animal and plant species and associations, widely distributed and unique	Institutes of higher education, student associations Reserves Scientific research institutes Geographic, biological, ornithological centers and societies Non-profit organizations specialized in scientific and applied studies	Administration Local executive bodies Представители промышленности, туристического сектора, сельского и рыбного хозяйства Coastal stripe population Youth Scientific community Ecological/environmental centers Educational institutions



Activity directions	Possible concrete activities	Participating institutions	Stakeholders
	ecosystems. Public expertise in the field of ecology. Participation in the State & State Environmental Expertise and EIA of the Caspian related projects. Publications and popularization of studies in the field of ecology/environment.		Institutes of higher education Scientific research institutes and centers
Initiatives of public organizations and population in addressing pressing environmental and social problems in the near Caspian region	Meetings with governing structures, representatives from industry, tourism sector, agriculture. Holding of conferences via e-mail	Public organizations of environmental orientation Reserves Public associations of the media workers	Tehran Convention bodies Administration Local executive bodies Representatives from industrial, tourism, agriculture and fisheries sectors Coastal stripe population Non-profit organizations and other associations of citizens
Support to the development of eco-tourism in the region.	Enlightenment work among tourists and vacationers. Issuing of booklets, schematic maps, flyers. Arrangement of anschlags etc. Ecologically oriented tours	Touristic unions and guilds Reserves	Administration Local executive bodies Coastal stripe population Reserves
Consolidation of environmental initiatives of representatives from the state, public and commercial structures to address environmental challenges	Public environmental expertise Organization of public hearings Development of mechanisms to improve the public hearings process Participation in EIA of the Caspian projects in a transboundary context Organization of working meetings and workshops Establishment of partnerships	Public organizations of environmental orientation PR departments of the state bodies Organizations specialized in scientific and applied studies	Tehran Convention bodies Administration Local executive bodies Representatives from industrial, tourism, agriculture and fisheries sectors Coastal stripe population
Promotion to the development of intersectoral cooperation	Organization of work meetings, round tables, and workshops Establishment of trilateral partnerships: «Society – Business – Government»	Public organizations of environmental orientation Representatives from industrial and tourism sectors Authorities Media	Tehran Convention bodies Administration Local executive bodies Representatives from industrial, tourism, agriculture and fisheries sectors Coastal stripe population

Activity directions	Possible concrete activities	Participating institutions	Stakeholders
Promotion to the development of public 'environmental' diplomacy in the region	Establishment of the regional Network of the Tehran Convention public support Holding of the Caspian Day 'Environmentalization' of international meetings of the regional public	Public organizations of environmental orientation	Tehran Convention bodies National executive bodies of the Caspian littoral states Executive bodies of the near Caspian subjects of the Russian Federation
Promotion to the increase of journalists' interest to the discussion of environmental/ecological themes and increase of professional skills for their coverage in press.	Attention attraction of media workers to environmental problems Organization of seminars on issues related to the environmental protection and sustainable development	Public organizations of environmental orientation Public associations of the media workers	Administration Local executive bodies Media Public