

TAI and Development

Strategy for Estonia: Environmental Democracy Integration into Development Cooperation Policy

August-September 2008

Prepared by the Stockholm Environment Institute Tallinn Centre, Estonian Institute for Sustainable Development, discussed at the roundtable on Aug. 21, 2008 and at the meetings with the representatives of the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Environment (Aug. 26 and Sept. 4, 2008).

The aim of the strategy is to enhance the Estonian development cooperation policy to take into account environmental access rights implementation and to promote environmental democracy in partner countries.

The strategy is based on the Principles of Estonian Development Co-operation, Riigikogu Resolution of 15 January 2003 and on the findings of the Sri Lanka TAI¹ assessment reports prepared by the Public Interest Law Foundation (PILF):

- 1) Access to Information. TAI findings in Sri Lanka. September 2007, Bangkok.
- 2) Public Participation. TAI findings in Sri Lanka. September 2007, Bangkok.
- 3) The Access Initiative (TAI). Poverty Study 2. Sri Lanka. Revised report. February 2008.

In order to achieve the aim of the strategy the following actions need to be taken by the NGOs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Environment:

1. To ensure that good environmental governance and the access principles are implemented in every development cooperation project funded from the Estonian development assistance by integrating the access principles into the project proposals evaluation criteria.
2. To support at the national level of recipient countries the ratification of international treaties promoting access rights and their incorporation into domestic legislation and action plans.
3. To support capacity building of the partner countries (civil society, public authorities, media) on access rights and their implementation.
4. To disseminate information about the access principles and the TAI assessment methodology in Estonia and EU development cooperation policy institutions as a tool for analysing the target country situation and needs for the international development cooperation.

¹ The Access Initiative (TAI) is the network of civil society organizations working to ensure that citizens and communities have the access to information about government decisions, public participation in decision-making, and access to justice when their rights to information, participation, and a clean environment are violated.