Category: **Obligation to Facilitate Public Participation in Environmental Decision-Making**

Sub-Category: **Innovative Participatory Mechanisms**

Name of Good Practice: **Alvari - Community Participation Mechanism**

Key Words: Participation, Community Organisations, Local Government

Implementing Actors: Sub-National Government: City of Tampere

Location: Finland

Description: The city of Tampere in southern Finland, which has a population of 220,609 as of January 2014, created an integrated system for public participation called Alvari in 2007. Alvari serves as an advisory working group model enabling citizens to participate in city administration, thus promoting a bottom-up perspective to planning. The initiative created four advisory working groups representing different geographic locations in the city consisting of representatives of civil service organisations, non-governmental organisations, and interested private individuals. Working groups hold meetings to discuss ongoing projects and allow citizens to be involved in planning, operating and informing local authorities. They also issue proposals and comments to the city and support the administration, thus creating the opportunity for the groups to provide the city with transparent and innovative ideas. Each working group runs for a period of two years, and has an annual budget of €20,000 to develop activities representing the community spirit of the area. Through Alvari, the city emphasizes social, human and intellectual capital while building public trust and a new political culture of openness for a sustainable future. Although the working groups address a wide range of planning issues, many of the issues also include environmental planning and services, such as the creation of parks, beaches, environmental education initiatives, and development.

Since 2007, Alvari advisory working groups have participated in over 350 planning-related decisions. In 2011, the Alvari programme received a Globe Award, a global sustainability award which recognizes and encourages societies, the corporate sector, individuals and academia that have excelled in the area of sustainability.

**Further Information:** <http://globeaward.org/2011_tampere.html>; <http://www.tampere.fi/material/attachments/a/unnamed_10926/alvariesite2012.pdf>, <http://www.ubcwheel.eu/index.php/gpdp:/article/599>