Category: Procedural Obligations - General

Sub-Category: Civil Society Monitoring Mechanisms

Name of Good Practice: **The Access Initiative**

Key Words: Access to Information, Access to Justice, Principle 10, Public Participation, Rio Declaration

Implementing Actors: Civil Society Organisation: Members of The Access Initiative

Location: Global

Description: The Access Initiative (TAI), which was established in 1999, is a global network of more than 150 civil society organisations that promote the procedural rights of access to information, public participation, and justice in environmental decision-making. Member organisations from around the world carry out evidence-based advocacy to encourage collaboration and innovation that advances transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness in decision-making at all levels. TAI is led by seven civil society organizations known as the core team. Each of the core team members acts as a regional lead. The World Resource Institute, one of the core team members, serves as the Secretariat for the global TAI network.

TAI has developed a number of mechanisms to support its civil society organisations as they undertake advocacy relating to procedural rights. For example, it has developed an advocacy toolkit, which provides guidance for organisations to undertake effective advocacy, such as how to assess problems, build evidence to support their advocacy, create work plans and identify opportunities or venues for change. TAI has also developed an assessment toolkit that helps civil society coalitions assess environmental governance in their countries and identify opportunities to make positive changes. Based on experience gained from conducting 32 assessments around the world, TAI updated its assessment toolkit in 2006. As part of the update, web-based software was developed to help TAI coalitions easily conduct assessments, analyze their findings, and store their data. In 2010, TAI compiled case studies that highlighted experiences from its members relating to the progress in the implementation of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration and the gaps that still remain. These case studies were submitted to the Secretariat of the Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development. TAI is also an important partner in the development of the Environmental Democracy Index (EDI), an index designed to measure country specific realization of environmental procedural rights through an analysis of national laws and regulations.

**Further Information:** TAI’s website: <http://www.accessinitiative.org/>; the advocacy and assessment toolkits are available at: <http://www.accessinitiative.org/resources>; more information on the EDI is available at <http://www.wri.org/our-work/project/access-initiative-tai/commissions>.