

Key Milestones of NGO Development:

**The Code of Good Practice
for Civil Participation
in the Decision-Making Process**

Baltic Sea NGO Forum

Vilnius, Lithuania 16-17 April, 2010

Background

- **Sigtuna meeting** - Council of Europe Forum for the Future of Democracy 2007
- Call from NGOs for a **Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation** with:
 - **mechanisms** for participation in decision-making processes
 - **other forms** of citizens' involvement
- Committee of Minister **Recommendation 14(2007)** on the legal status of NGOs

Objectives

- Contribute to an **enabling environment** for NGOs by:
 - defining general **principles, guidelines, tools and mechanism**
 - **implement code** at local and national level
- Make it a **live** and **action-oriented** instrument
- **Targets:**
 - National NGOs → plus regional and local
 - International NGOs
 - National public authorities

Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation - Process

- Council of Europe Consultation over autumn 2008 to spring 2009 led to collective drafting over a number of meetings, unique participatory process:
- Regional meetings and web-consultation, including meetings in Sweden (North & Central Eastern Europe), Russia (Eastern Europe), Ukraine (Eastern Europe), Istanbul (South Eastern Europe), Strasbourg (Western Europe)
- Collecting best practices, cases and methods
- Soft standard setting instrument
- Drafted by national NGO experts on request of Conference of INGOs of Council of Europe
- Builds on existing knowledge of national civil society agreements, such as the Compact (UK), EKAK (Estonia) etc.

Code content and structure

Based on
CM Rec
(2007) 14
legal
status of
NGOs

Part One

I. Introduction

II. Objectives and Target

III. General Framework for Civil Participation

- Parameters
- Principles
- Conditions

Part Two

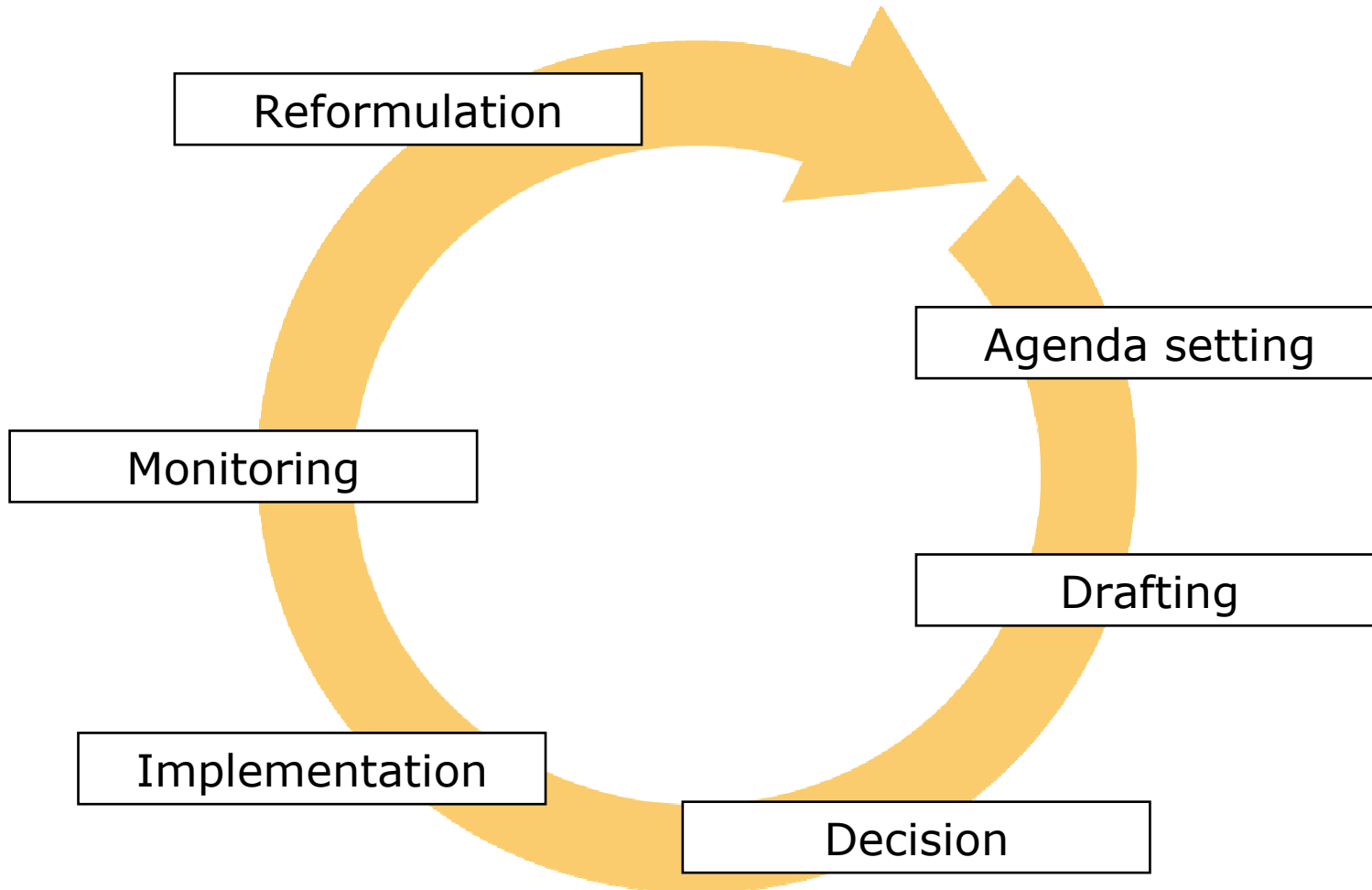
IV. How to Engage

- Levels of Participation
- Steps in the Political Decision-Making Process
- Cross-cutting tools and mechanisms

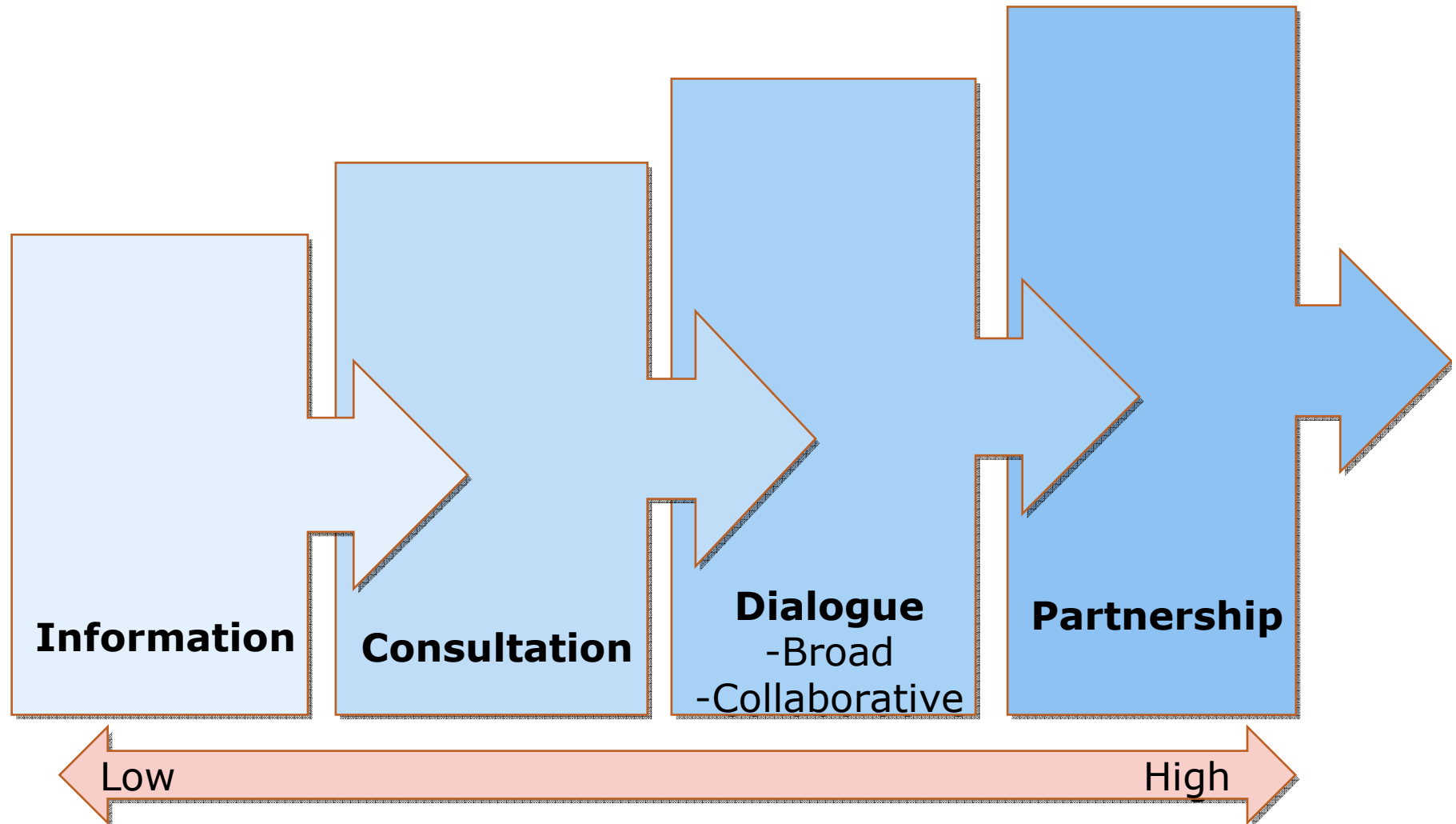
V. Matrix of Civil Participation

Implementation →

Political decision making process



Levels of participation



Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation

Key priorities

Partnership	Work group or committee	Co-drafting	Joint decision-making Co-decision making	Strategic partnerships	Work groups or committee	Work groups or committee
Dialogue	Hearings and public forums Citizens' forums and future councils Key government contact	Hearings and Q&A panels Expert seminars Multi-stakeholder committees and advisory bodies	Open plenary or committee sessions	Capacity building seminars Training seminars	Work groups or committee	Seminars and deliberative forums
Consultation	Petitioning Consultation online or other techniques	Hearings and Q&A panels Expert seminars Multi-stakeholder committees and advisory bodies	Open plenary or committee sessions	Events, conferences, forums, seminars	Feedback mechanisms	Conferences or meetings Online consultation
Information	Easy and open information access Research Campaigning and lobbying Website for key documents	Open and free access to policy documents Website for key documents Campaigns and lobbying Web casts Research input	Campaigning and lobbying	Open access to information Website for information access E-mail alerts FAQ Public tendering procedures	Open access to information Evidence gathering Evaluations Research studies	Open access to information
Levels of participation Steps in the political decision making process	Agenda setting	Drafting	Decision	Implementation	Monitoring	Reformulation

Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation – Key priorities

- Series of recommendations aimed at national NGOs and national public authorities
- Provides clear guidelines on participation of civil society across Europe that may also be used at EU and international level governance
- Considers 2 axes for the process: 1. Levels of Participation; 2. Steps in the Political Decision-Making cycle
- Offers guiding principles and practical useful tools in each part of the process

Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation - Framework for Dialogue?

- Council of Europe CGPCP offers a transparent framework for civil society with public authorities, a “Civil Society Compact/Charter”
- Improves exchange of information, and effective engagement of civil society on a broad comparative basis
- A reciprocal agreement that sets out the responsibilities of civil society BUT also clear undertakings on the part of public authorities
- Recognition of role of civil society in strong democracy, complementary role of representative and participatory democracy

**For further information on
Council of Europe website:**

www.coe.int/t/ngo

Major Initiatives

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