Local Politics and Sustainable Municipal Agenda

Environmental Committees in Local Authorities

By Vitaly Vainblat
Internship Info

- Intern position at “Life & Environment” - The Israeli Union of Environmental NGOs.

- Coordination of national NGOs’ committee on implementation of the Israeli Local Government Act (amendment: 2005).

- Duration: 01/03/2009 – 18/06/2009.
Background

The amendment to the Israeli Local Government Act (2005):

- Every local authorities (total of 253) must establish an environmental committee\(^1\).

- In addition to elected councilmembers, the panel of the committee shall include two representatives from civil society and one outside observer to from national environmental NGOs.

\(^1\)Before the amendment it was their right but not their obligation.
In addition to members mentioned above, there are several local officials that are invited to the committee.
Green now

- “Green Now” – environmental awareness campaign towards the 2008 municipal elections.
- National and local environmental NGOs cooperation.
- Contribution to the election of dozens of green oriented politicians.
- Work plan and legislation suggestions.
- Main target – Close the gap between urgent environmental issues and their resolution by the local decision makers.
Environmental Movement Joint Committee
Main Goals

- **Map (diagnose)** local environmental committees status (quantitative and qualitative).
- **Facilitate** informational network between all chairpersons.
- **Coordinate** consultation and approval procedures between local authorities and national environmental NGOs.
- **Recruit** observers to the local committees activities.
- **Document** the work process an order to create solid database.
Achievements

- Current status in 64 cities: there are 46 appointed committees; 9 cities don’t have committees; in 9 cities the status is unknown.

- 46 chairpersons received first newsletter of the project.

- As a result of the consultation process 21 pairs of local environmental NGO’s representatives have been approved and appointed as members.

- There are close to 30 candidates (from all over the country) for observer positions.
Future challenges

- **Networking** – Improve network abilities and procedures. Include all members in the network database.

- **Capacity building** – Provide environmental skills to committee’s members by training programs.

- **Empowerment** – maximize the circle of NGO engagement with local authorities in order to improve communication and negotiation abilities.
Thank you for your attention

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