

EN2E: Establish mechanisms for receiving and dealing with citizen complaints related to water resources use

REGULATORY FUNCTION: ENVIRONMENT		EN2E
OBJECTIVE EN2 Environmental compliance of water and wastewater service operators, industries and agriculture is monitored through collected information on the status of water resources, its use and protection	ACTION CARD EN2E <h1>ESTABLISH MECHANISMS FOR RECEIVING AND DEALING WITH CITIZEN COMPLAINTS RELATED TO WATER RESOURCES USE</h1>	
COST: Medium FREQUENCY: One time TARGET GROUPS: Regulators, environmental authorities, civil society organizations		
DESCRIPTION Environmental regulators are often responsible for identifying any possible unsustainable use of water resources. Regulators are increasingly performing this task through online platforms or by phone, where citizens are invited to submit their complaints, follow up with a regulator on appropriate resolutions, and potentially obtain compensation. Interactive digital mechanisms could be developed alongside similar kinds of existing platforms within environmental authorities. Complaint mechanisms must clearly outline the steps and procedures, and be accessible to all interested parties.		
EXPECTED OUTCOMES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential breaches and non-compliance with water abstraction and wastewater effluent discharge licenses are quickly identified. • Environmental damage to water bodies is minimized. • Citizens are actively engaged in protecting the environment. 		
EXAMPLE: CANADA In Canada , the mission of Québec's Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs (MDDEP) is to protect the environment and natural ecosystems for the benefit of current and future generations. As part of its mission, the ministry monitors activities to ensure they comply with Québec's environmental laws, and citizens are invited to play a part by reporting any activity that appears harmful to the environment. The ministry checks complaints and response when there is reason to believe an activity does not comply with laws and regulations, such as manure spreading too close to a drinking water well.		
LINKS http://www.environnement.gouv.qc.ca/ministere/plaintes/env-complaint.htm		
INTERNAL CAPACITIES NEEDED AND THE ROLE OF PARTNERS Establishing complaints and reporting mechanisms for potential environmental breaches requires administrative and IT capacity to establish and maintain a dedicated and 24 hour phone line and associated online reporting systems to track progress in dealing with reports. Technical capacity is also required to develop guidelines regarding what classifies as a potential breach, along with communication skills to raise public awareness of the importance of reporting potential environmental breaches. Development partners can support by facilitating participatory dialogue to reach a consensus on a list of guidelines for packaging and communicating to the public, and providing technical and financial support.		