The Access Initiative
Second Global Gathering

Sligo Ireland
October 30, 2008 to November 1, 2008

Overview

The Access Initiative (TAI), founded in 2001, is the world's largest network of civil society organizations working to ensure that people have the right and ability to influence decisions about the natural resources that sustain their communities. Working in their respective countries, TAI partners from national coalitions assess the performance of their governments to provide the public with the three pillars of access; access to information about government decisions, public participation in decision-making, and access to justice when their rights to information, participation, and a clean environment are violated.

The right to obtain government information, right to participate in government decision-making and the right to seek justice are a bundle of valuable rights which we call 'access rights.'

TAI Partners use assessments to advocate for legal, institutional and practice reforms, raise public awareness, and engage their governments in a constructive dialogue to create change within their countries.

Currently, TAI has over 150 partners in 45 countries.

The second Access Initiative Global Gathering was held from October 30 – November 1, 2008 in Sligo, Ireland. The three-day gathering was co-hosted by the Sligo Institute of Technology (IT-Sligo) and the World Resources Institute (WRI).

Please see Annex 1 for a full list of participants.

Highlights & Accomplishments

- 50 participants representing 29 countries attended the Global Gathering. This was the largest international conference held at Sligo Institute of Technology.
- Jeremy Wates, from the Aarhus Convention Secretariat in Geneva, opened the conference by discussing the importance of access work in the role of shaping environmental policy.
- The deputy leader of Seanad Eireann (the Senate of Ireland), and Green Party chairperson, Senator Dan Boyle, addressed the gathering. He spoke on Ireland's need to ratify the Aarhus convention and the importance of access to information in a mature democracy.
- TAI partners shared ideas, stories, successes and solutions for moving the network to more action on the ground.
- Latin American partners agreed on next steps for a collaborative regional advocacy plan.
- The revised Access Initiative website was officially launched. New features include: public and private communities of practice; partner profiles; a blog; resource pages; and an online reporting matrix.
- The TAI Secretariat shared major themes and messages from its publication, *Voice and Choice: Opening the Door to Environmental Democracy*.
- Partners received a communications training hosted by IT Sligo's Communication Department.
- Partners discussed case studies on access rights for the poor carried out by five TAI partners and next steps for including poverty-access rights analysis in all future TAI assessments.
- The Thailand Environment Institute (TEI) introduced partners to a draft citizen's toolkit.
- New sectors were explored in the context of TAI, including climate change, forestry and aid effectiveness.
- The Secretariat announced a new Request for Proposals. For 2009 funding.

Objectives

Convened at the Institute of Technology Sligo in Ireland, the meeting was organized into participatory learning sessions, strategy planning and group bonding activities. The activities for the three days consisted of plenary presentations, discussions and hands on trainings. The overall objectives for the gathering are highlighted in Box 1.

This report is a detailed account of the objectives, progression and outcomes of each meeting day. Please see Annex 2 for the original agenda.

Day One:
The first day focused on gathering momentum, celebrating success stories, communicating TAI's work and building communities of practice.

Day Two:
The objective of the second day was effecting change both within the network and on the ground. Sessions focused on the development of new TAI tools, TAI network governance, and funding. In addition, cultural activities were planned to encourage partners to learn more about each other as colleagues and friends.

Day Three:
On the final day of the gathering, partners addressed the following themes: overcoming challenges, exploring new areas of work and building capacity on the ground.

Box 1
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES & EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Share our success stories & challenges ➔	Return home invigorated and inspired
Tell our stories better ➔	Gather new ideas, strategies and solutions
for change on the ground	
Build a community of practice ➔	Collaborate to build and revise TAI Tools
Build and refine TAI Tool ➔	Build & use the community of practice
Consolidate the access rights movement	

Day 1: October 30, 2008: Gathering Momentum

Introductions & Opening Remarks

Michael Ewing, TAI Ireland lead coalition coordinator from IT-Sligo, opened the meeting with an introduction and overview of the agenda.

Lalanath de Silva, Director of The Access Initiative at WRI, outlined the overall structure and vision of the conference. In his opening remarks Mr. de Silva asked the conference participants three poignant questions: "What will our legacy be? What will we leave behind? Will we change laws, institutions and practices to enable people to have a voice in decisions and a seat at the table?"

Mr. de Silva also asked TAI partners to think about how they could build the initiative/network into a movement of lasting change for people on the ground.

Subsequently, Jeremy Wates, representing the Aarhus Secretariat, spoke about the sustainability and democracy goals within the Aarhus Convention. Mr. Wates emphasized the linkage between access rights (e.g., access to information, access to justice and public participation) and the need for a strong foundation for a participatory democracy.

Additionally, Mr. Wates stated that the Convention Secretariat is trying to get an Aarhus-like convention adopted as an international treaty, implemented by the United Nations Environment Program guaranteeing the rights of Principle 10 and creating a legally binding instrument for access rights, throughout Aarhus countries.

Mr. Wates concluded by describing the Access Initiative as a cutting edge movement that gives civil society a voice in access rights.

Opening remarks continued with a welcome by the President of IT-Sligo, Professor Terri Scott. She highlighted the University's achievements in conducting the TAI- Ireland assessment and moving domestic environmental laws forward.

Celebrating Success Stories

Andrea Sanhueza of Corporación Participa (Chile) facilitated a session on influential change on the ground. Stories were shared by TAI partners from Cameroon, Thailand, Mexico and Sri Lanka.

Cameroon

The first presentation, consisted of a video, *Above And Beyond the Majority: Some Anecdotes from TAI Activities Cameroon*, *produced* by Augustine Njamnshi from Bioresources Development and Conservation Programme Cameroon (BDCP). The movie highlighted the importance of public participation at the village level in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process. BDCP conducted educational trainings and wrote guidelines explaining public rights on EIA laws, captured in the movie.

Thailand

Dr. Somrudee Nicro of Thailand Environment Institute (TEI), discussed some of the activities undertaken and outcomes achieved by the TAI-Thailand coalition in promoting the implementation of Thailand's Official Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Dr. Nicro explained the intricacies of the Thai Constitution and laws that give people the right to participate in decisions. She noted the limitations of the provision on access to environmental information and described how TAI-Thailand brought together a broad coalition of stakeholders, including government officials and civil society groups to make recommendations about the implementation of specific provisions of the FOIA relating to public documents.

Categories of documents identified in the stakeholder process included: research reports (EIA), draft agreements, concessions, contracts, allocations and policies, plans, project, budget and loans.

A proposal to improve access to information was submitted to Thailand's Official Information Commission on 18 September 2008.

Mexico

Juan Carlos Carrillo, representing Iniciativa de Acceso México (IA-Mex) / Centro Mexicano de Derecho Ambiental, shared IA-Mex's experience producing five television shows highlighting environmental and access rights issues. Titled "Code Green," the series focuses on messages from the TAI assessments and communicates to the public their role in demanding better access. Known actors and celebrities volunteered their time to the project which raised the profile of the television series. The national television broadcasting system agreed to air the series which drew national attention from the government and citizens alike. The series is now translated into English and can be found on YouTube and www.inconnexionambiental.org.mx.

IA-Mex also worked with SEMARNAT, the Indigenous Languages National Institute (INALI) and Traductores e Interpretes Indígenas to transform parts of Code Green to make radio programs in the Mayan and Nahuatl languages.   These radio programs target marginalized stakeholders from indigenous communities in the Yucatan Peninsula encouraging them to exercise their rights.

In closing, Juan Carlos left the partners with some advice, "Aim high! Making educational television series can be more difficult than the assessment process, but everyone we worked with—from scientists to public personalities—were very willing to collaborate to make an entertaining, educational and inspirational product. This has been a very dynamic way for IA-Mex to reach broader audiences and transmit our messages in a simple and effective way."

Sri Lanka

Arjuna Seneviratne, Green Movement-Sri Lanka, presented a film *Let Justice Flow - Deduru Oya Sandmining*, produced by World Resources Institute. The film was based on the work of the Green Movement of Sri Lanka, Navoda Environmental Conservation Society and TAI Sri Lanka.

The film highlights a sand mining case in a local Sri Lankan river system, the struggles and hardships of the local community members, their courage to use the court system to demand proper redress, and the success in rehabilitating the river eco-system. The local communities supported by the Green Movement acted independently in taking the case to court and ensuring that justice prevailed.   The case resulted in a victory for the local communities, the environment and for access rights.
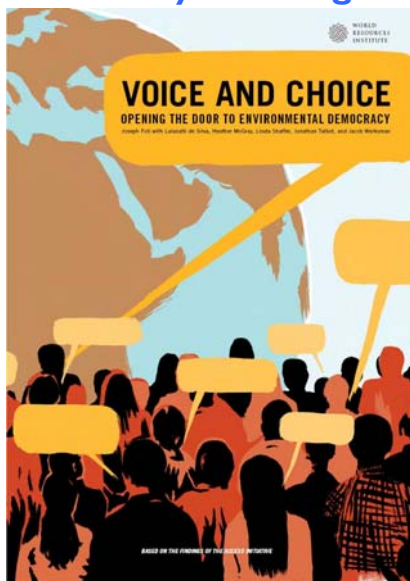
To conclude, participants asked questions and shared thoughts from personal experiences.

Some overall themes that emerged:
- If simplified, access rights can be communicated to villagers in remote areas so they can effectively exercise these rights.
- By mobilizing large numbers of people, it is possible to get politicians to pay attention to environmental issues.
- Coalition building is important. By bringing together large segments of civil society it is possible to collaborate with government to move legislation and implementation forward.
- Outreach plans should be fluid to guarantee the results benefit the intended stakeholders.
- When working with the mass media aim high and have an outreach plan, especially when producing and disseminating TV and radio shows.
- Ensuring that access to redress and remedy is available through legally established institutions is essential for the successful implementation of access rights.

Voice and Choice: Opening the Door to Environmental Democracy- The Big Messages

Joseph Foti, from WRI, presented the main messages and findings from *Voice and Choice: Opening the Door to Environmental Democracy*.

A follow-up to *Closing the Gap: Information, Participation and Justice in Decision-making for the Environment*, *Voice and Choice* goes beyond how to assess access laws to how to advance an access movement.

The main themes that were highlighted include:
- Opening access: how access rights lie at the intersection of the environment, democracy and human rights;
- Moving access forward: an outline of human rights and international covenants; and
- Overcoming hurdles: case studies from different countries on successful implementation of access.

Partners discussed the report in-depth and generated ideas for outreach. They felt the report could:
- Raise the profile of partners' work on the ground.
- Promote more proactive environmental information systems.
- Aid in establishing the importance of access to information, public participation, and access to justice in order to shift political will.
- Demonstrate successful collaboration between governments and civil society organizations.
- Highlight the role of the media in disseminating information to a wide audience in a timely manner.

Findings from The Access Initiative will continue to be published, beginning with access to justice information which was not featured in *Voice & Choice*. To read the entire report, please go to: http://www.accessinitiative.org/resource/voice-and-choice-opening-door-environmental-democracy

Building Communities of Practice

Lalanath de Silva, WRI, showcased three communities of practice (CoPs), also known as online discussion groups. The three main themes of the CoPs are: (a) the access law and practice (b) public participation and (c) access-poverty-environment. Starting in June 2008, seven "champions" were recruited to populate information on the website's CoPs.

The global communications platform serves as a hub for sharing lessons in the field, tools & resources and dialogue for growing the network. Additionally, the conversations that take place on the CoPs are archived for historical documentation.

Five partners, Dr. Csaba Kiss, EMLA, Hungary; Michael Ewing, TAI-Ireland; Ritwick Dutta, LIFE/Environics, India; Daniel Barragán, CEDA, Ecuador and Ram Charitra Shah, Pro Public, Nepal recounted the advantages and usefulness of the communities. They encouraged all partners to get involved in the discussions to ensure they continue to flourish.

Website Training

In this session lead by Daniel Barragán, CEDA, and Monika Kerdeman, WRI, partners were given hands-on connectivity training of the updated website features including the communities of practice

The revised website is a unique and powerful platform to advocate the work of partners. It now gives partners the ability to add and showcase regional, country, organization and individual information, profiles and events. Partners can now post access resources, videos and blog entries. Additionally, the site offers a way for partners to track outcomes in their country through a reporting matrix which is displayed on every TAI country page. Lastly, the site serves as the main tool for development and growth of the CoPs.

Major themes that emerged from the previous two sessions focused on the language barrier for website communications. Partners have been encouraged to communicate in their own language on the blog and regional pages, but to ensure there is a brief English description of the story or activities. Partners can create communities of practice in their own language, such as Plaza Latina, which Daniel Barragán created in Spanish to discuss the Latin American regional plan.

The rest of the website will remain in English, for now, except the "About Us" section which is already translated into French, Russian, Spanish and Portuguese.

Feedback on the new website was overwhelmingly positive, with a few questions about specific features and the user interface.

Communicating our Work

Story telling is an influential and powerful mechanism to convey ideas and work with targeted audiences. This session gave partners the chance to better understand how to communicate their work with governments, donors and the general public.

Molly McCloskey, an award-winning author who has written for the United Nations High Commission on Refugees, and Una Mannion, Professor of Literature, IT-Sligo, conducted the course. Partners worked individually and in break-out groups on the

components of good story telling and writing techniques.

After some guided practice, partners shared stories from their own experiences, using techniques from the session. Story tellers included Arjuna Seneviratne (Sri Lanka), Suphasuk Pradubsuk (Thailand), Loraine Gatlabayan (Philippines), and George Gapu (Zimbabwe). Each story captured compelling environmental access narratives demonstrating that, as access practitioners, TAI partners have great stories to tell. Material used in this session can be found on the TAI website.
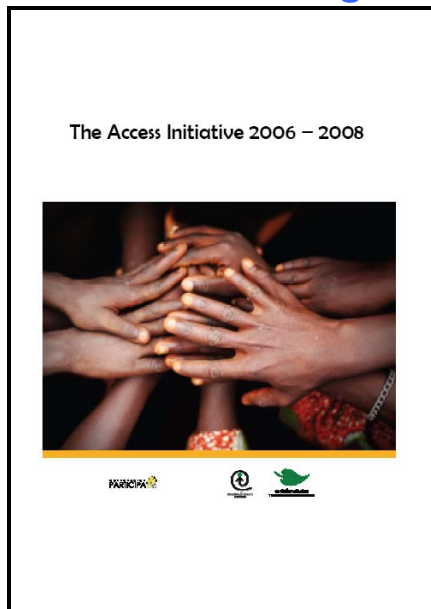
Close of Day 1:

After the sessions concluded, partners returned to the Glasshouse Hotel for a group dinner and a traditional Irish Ceilidh (dance celebration). A professional instructor taught dance steps with the accompaniment of a live Irish band. The celebration gave partners the chance to relax after a long day of meetings, experience a small taste of Irish culture and create lasting memories with TAI partners.

Day 2: October 31, 2008: Effecting Change

TAI Secretariat Report and Core Team Meeting

The second day of the TAI Global Gathering opened with a presentation of the TAI Secretariat report and a summary of the recent Core Team meeting held on Tuesday October 28. The session was jointly lead by Linda Shaffer, WRI, and Tomas Severino, IA-Mex/Cultura Ecológica, A.C.

The Access Initiative 2006-2008 Report highlights selected TAI partner activities and stories from around the world. It also details Secretariat funding sources and profiles Core Team members.

Just before the Global Gathering, Core Team members met to discuss TAI network and governance issues. The Core Team welcomed a new member, Ritwick Dutta from India who will represent TAI South Asia. The group also held preliminary discussions about potential private sector engagement.

Core Team members also finalized the governance structure matrix which was a product of the TAI Governance Task Force led by Somrudee Nicro, TEI. The matrix clearly identifies specific roles for the Secretariat, Core Team, Regional Leads, National Leads and National Partners in ensuring governance and management of the network, assessment processes and new growth. Annex 3 has the completed chart.

There was little feedback from the network regarding both the governance structure chart and the report. Though, the feedback given indicated that partners felt the network was headed in a positive direction.

The World Bank DGF Grant, Goals for the Year and Reporting

Linda Shaffer, WRI, gave an overview of partner activities that were funded under the World Bank DGF grant from 2007-2008.

Activities were divided into four categories:
1. National TAI assessments
2. Government consultation
3. Implementation of assessment results
4. Learning activities

Ms. Shaffer also introduced the second year of DGF funding and the 2009 Request for Proposals (RFP).

Significant time was reserved for questions and answers. To conclude the session, the Secretariat invited partners to personally share their experiences with the DGF grant during the next day's session on the same topic.

Parallel Working Groups

The next two sessions were parallel working groups.

Collectively Developing Advocacy Tools

This group discussion on developing advocacy tools was moderated by Liña Marcela Muñoz, Universidad Rosario, Colombia.   Examples of potential TAI advocacy tools were introduced by Joseph Foti and Lalanath de Silva, WRI. Ritwick Dutta, LIFE, India, shared his experiences with the development of the tools through the TAI communities of practice.

The aims of the session were two fold: inspire more partners to join the advocacy tools community of practice, and to help the development of tools and prioritize the needs of the network in deploying these tools.

Mr. de Silva presented a stakeholder analysis tool, which was widely supported by partners.

Mr. Foti presented a political mapping tool and a lobbying strategies tool. There was some concern from partners that the political mapping tool was based on a conventional left and right political axis and should be more flexible. There was also concern that the players on the map seemed very restrictive, whereas, political

systems are more complex. Lastly, partners felt there was more clarification needed to understand specific pressure groups and roles of political actors.

All partners agreed that the presented tools were useful but needed further development. Partners were reminded that none of these tools were compulsorily and they could pick and choose the tools that best suited their purposes based on their TAI assessment findings or campaign needs.

Thoughts on information and dissemination practices were shared for future development of TAI advocacy strategies.

- All partners agreed that advocacy is an important part of TAI's strategy and rights implementation and education process.
- The best way to maintain communication with one another and to move the advocacy agenda forward is to continue discussions on the website.
- Partners wanted to hear more stories --successful or not-- and learn advocacy approaches from others experiences.
- TAI partners suggested the possibility of having advocacy workshops following the completion of TAI assessments, either by a TAI partner or advocacy experts.

The long term goal is that the advocacy work will be beneficial to all partners especially those who have little or no advocacy experience.

Next Steps:
- TAI Secretariat will integrate critiques of tools as noted during the session.
- TAI Secretariat will develop further tools including advocacy learning workshops.
- Partners will continue to write stories on the communities of practice as a source for continued sharing.

The Citizen's Tool

Somrudee Nicro from TEI presented the Citizen's Tool. The presentation outlined the history and demand-driven purpose of the tool.

TEI developed the tool based on the TAI assessment method, though the major difference between them is the citizen's tool is specifically intended to give local community citizens a useful and effective method for participation in the decision-making process, whereas the TAI method is not intended for this purpose.

The Thai tool serves to build the capacity of local communities. The tool is helpful not just to collect information, but to also make recommendations.

Partners discussed the merits of the tool and provided some suggestions for improvement. For example, the value

guidelines may need to be more defined. Partners also cautioned against using the word "assessment" so that it can be distinguished from the TAI national assessment. They also suggested adding an introduction to the tool that explains how it differs from the TAI version 2.0 toolkit.

Adaptability is an important aspect of the citizen's tool. Partners agreed that it would be good to deploy a template citizen's tool that could be adapted by individual groups for each country's context and needs. Partners also suggested adding a simple explanation of the term 'environmental governance' to the introduction of the tool.

Overall, partners overwhelmingly felt the toolkit was a useful capacity building and empowerment tool. They also felt this could be a useful advocacy tool that could be adapted by national teams. They were keen to see if governments could use this in local contexts.

Finally partners agreed that this tookit need not be an official TAI product (i.e. partners need not approve it before use).

Next Steps:
- TEI will add an introduction that distinguishes the citizens' tool from the TAI version 2.0.
- TEI will create materials for workshops so modification by national teams can be made as needed.
- Pilot tests will be explored.

Development, Access and Aid Effectiveness

Dr. Csaba Kiss from Environmental Management Law Association, Hungary presented the European Union (EU) Presidency Fund supported Development Aid Effectiveness project. The purpose of the project was to evaluate donor aid policies within the European Union, to improve environmental governance and aid decision-making. The specific focus was on the new Eastern European donor countries.

TAI partners in Latvia, Estonia, Hungary and Poland were coupled with TAI partners in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Thailand. TAI assessments in developing countries were reviewed and shared with the Eastern European aid agency counterpart officials and roundtable discussions were held. The results of these consultations were shared among TAI partners at a full day meeting on October 29, 2008.

The group came up with recommendations based on input from TAI partners from these countries as well as from a number of other developing countries. A significant recommendation was the need for a more effective (true) South-North partnership. It was felt that this could enhance the credibility of advocates in the North.

Two partners who participated in the Aid Effectiveness project presented their research and views. Kordian Kochanowicz from the Institute for Global Responsibility IGO, Poland presented a short animated story and gave a power point presentation. He stressed the need for raising alternatives and improving donor nation conditionality on "rogue" donors. Some example countries include China and Iran, who do not have aid conditionality, especially regarding environment and democracy laws.

Arjuna Seneviratene of the Green Movement presented an alternative paradigm of development and asserted that some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the developing world also participate in questionable practices. He asserted that "these NGOs tied to northern aid systems, work with development aid agencies and know how to manipulate the aid system for narrow agendas. Northern countries are locked up in perceived ideologies of *help*. They exploit that perception on the side of donors and use it for their own benefit."

A more transparent and participatory aid process in both the donor and recipient nations would help to mitigate misuse, abuse and corruption. According to Mr. Seneviratene, "developing countries have lost control over the aid agendas, which is a major problem. Local communities have the needed skills to survive and manage the environment, but outside solutions have brought their own agendas, forcing communities to be treated as object rather than subjects."

There was a lively engagement from partners in the discussion that followed. Some of the points raised in this dialogue included:

- In real terms, very little aid is actually given to the beneficiary based on the spending requirements of the donors.
- Donor aid changes the dynamics for accountability between governments and its people, because it circumvents the taxation system.
- Development aid needs a more sustainable approach because a lot of money is invested in countries with little return and most often failed outcomes.
- Funds are given as aid to support the interests of aid agencies and don't necessarily respond to the needs of the people on the ground.
- Lessons from Eastern Europe must be explored. Why have they been able to close the gap so fast and become donors themselves, while the south continues to receive aid?
- There is a need to better understand the politics of aid and not romanticize it. There is a lot of good that has been done, but there are still problems.
- Access rights need to be better communicated to people on the ground.
- Both aid agencies and aid giving countries need to be more transparent.

In conclusion, partners who were interested in the topic were encouraged to interact on the TAI website discussion groups or contact Dr. Kiss directly.

Partner Bonding –Around Sligo, Ireland

Partners experienced more traditional Irish culture, by visiting a few Sligo landmarks. Joe McGowan, an Irish historian, folklorist and author specializing in the history of Sligo, accompanied partners on the journey.

The first stop was the commemorative statue of Madame Constance Markiewicz, an Irish-English activist and, later, politician, who fought for Ireland's independence and for the rights of the poor while serving in the English and Irish Parliaments.

Statue of Madame Constance Markiewicz

Partners next visited the grave of the famed Irish poet, W.B. Yates followed by a tour of the Lissadell House. The House holds an important place in Irish democratic history and women's history as the childhood home of Constance Markievicz.

Closing of Day 2: Dinner and Personal Story-Telling

At the end of the day, partners returned from the brisk Irish outdoors and retreated to a local Irish restaurant for dinner.

Tomás Severino from IA-Mex led a session on personal story. Partners were treated to anecdotes, stories, songs and poems, sharing reasons for devoting their careers to environmental and access issues.

Some partners shared how difficult it was for them growing up in closed societies, with little or no access rights and how they wanted to effect change. Others witnessed the environmental degradation and saw the need to champion environmental governance work as a path to creating change.

Being Halloween, Mr. McGowen shared a traditional Irish Halloween story with us. His story inspired Arjuna Seneviratene to share a poem with the group. (See Box 2.)

Box 2
POEM BY: Arjuna Seneviratene

I was born in storm of roses and thorn
Into murk made of mixture of sorrow and song
And felled to a ground to feed from a soil
Full of serpent in turmoil and tiger in toil.
Yet, her dark eyes sliced through the fear to the fall
Past a mind milking madness to a heart held in thrall
And cheating my destiny of sequential living
She fled with my soul when life wasn't looking
To stop me…
To stare…
For now and for ever
Into dreams made of rhythm of moonlight and heather
To mesh me in breeze tossed in scent soaked in star
*   shine*
Misted with gossamer and dusted with firefly
To feed me on tunes made of tremble and sigh
As earth whispered her love to the sea - and the
*   sky…*

Day 3: November 1, 2008: Meeting Challenges

Poverty Discussion Paper & Poverty Sensitized Toolkit

The third day began with a plenary discussion, led by Joseph Foti, WRI and facilitated by Prakash Mani Sharma Bhusal, ProPublic, on the poverty sensitization of the TAI toolkit.

WRI drafted new guidelines to sensitize the TAI Method. These guidelines were based on the outcomes of six pilot case studies and will be applied in all future TAI national assessments. New cases will illustrate situations that are typical for the poor within the country and each new assessment must include at least two case studies in each of the access categories of information, public participation and justice.

The three major take away themes from the findings of the poverty discussion paper were:

- The time and cost for people to engage in the decision making process to access information needs to be reduced, including through improvements in technology and subsidy of information.
- Governments must take affirmative actions that identify the poor, build on and communicate through

existing institutions, and subsidize the use of institutions responsible for access.
- Intermediary organizations need an enabling legal and institutional environment to carry out the tasks of advocacy, information and research.

Two partners, Patricia Abed, IDEA, Paraguay and Loraine Gatlabayan, Ateneo University, Philippines, shared experiences of assessing access using the poverty sensitized toolkit. Ms. Gatlabayan shared an example of poor mining community citizens participating in decisions made by a regulatory board in the Biak-na-Bato National Park case. Through this case, it was discovered that when local communities are involved in the research process and have the capacity to do the work they typically understand the process and can make a significant contribution to ensure accuracy of information.

Some of the barriers and set-backs to access for local communities mentioned throughout the session include:

- Lack of funding and the length of distance to travel to the location of stakeholder meetings.
- Limited funds for capacity building activities.
- There is insufficient training by governments to participate in regulatory decisions.

Though the session was largely informational, next steps were agreed upon:

Next Steps:

- The Secretariat will review partner comments and finalize the sensitization guidelines.
- The Core Team will review the guidelines.
- The guidelines will be integrated into the standard assessment method before December 31, 2008.

Reporting Outcomes and DGF Grant Application Process

This session, facilitated by Andrea Sanhueza, Corporación Participa, and led by Linda Shaffer, WRI was a more in-depth dialogue between partners and the TAI Secretariat about partner DGF funding opportunities and possible activities for the coming year.

Recipients of the first year DGF grant shared their experiences implementing supported activities. (These activities can be found in the 2006-2008 TAI Report).

Partners were also informed that a new proposal template would be available on the Access Initiative website in early November 2008.

Partners were also reminded of the importance to be very specific when describing activity outputs in the proposal. Joint regional proposals were also highly encouraged.

The Secretariat will post the RFP and proposal template on the TAI website. An online discussion group will also be established to address any questions regarding the application process.

Parallel Working Groups
Forestry Governance & The Access Initiative

Forest conservation, development and governance are serious problems in developing countries. That is why access rights play a critical role in managing and overcoming these problems. TAI partners recognize this governance gap and want to make efforts to promote and improve forest governance practices to include all stakeholders, especially communities with associated cultural links to the forests.

In this session, Dr. Csaba Kiss, EMLA, presented his experience applying the TAI toolkit in the forest sector in Hungary. Lalanath da Silva, WR, also presented the work of the Governance of Forest Initiative (GFI) – designing and developing a new assessment GFI toolkit.

Lalanath de Silva presented a GFI toolkit grid. The grid was a tool for collecting and analyzing governance related data. The grid maps elements of access rights such as transparency and inclusiveness against aspects of forest governance, such as policy, laws, permits, etcs.

Mr. de Silva also welcomed interest from TAI partners to undertake pilot testing of the toolkit, when launched in 2009. Participants made specific recommendations to the GFI grid in Annex 4. Some comments for the GFI indicator framework include:

- Including consultation mechanisms, like Advisory Councils is an important indicator because they do not necessarily imply participation or inclusiveness.
- It is necessary to take into account the institutions involved in forest management.

Participants agreed that Institutional arrangements should be assessed as a cross cutting element in the grid.
- Any forestry indicators should take into account the forest communities.
- The assessment toolkit grid must also include a row related to "responsibility" or legal mandate of institutions because legal mandates often are inadequate or conflict with practices.

During the session there was a discussion of Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) and the relationship between access and forests. Partners noted that a majority of forests have serious governance problems that inhibit reduced deforestation etc, and suggested that the legal framework for REDD is weak.

To conclude, partners shared what forest governance practices and policies were taking shape in their own countries. For example, TAI- Costa Rica partner, Luis Diego Segura, FUNPADEM, stated that Costa Rica is addressing problems related to land tenure of indigenous communities, public areas and national parks. TAI partners are executing a project to teach communities how they could solve problems without violence.

In Nepal there is a program focused on involving communities in forest management that is exploring ways to improve access rights and governance.

Climate Change and Access Rights

This plenary session, facilitated by Teresa Flores, PRODENA, Bolivia, identified potential TAI interventions in climate change issues. As the first formal TAI conversation about climate change, the discussion began with partners sharing the particular challenges that their country faced.

Joseph Foti, WRI presented a framework for how TAI might approach climate change issues. He offered three observations:
- TAI is strongest at the national level and should pursue working exclusively at that level.
- How climate policy is implemented at the national level and what institutions are responsible may vary by "climate subsector" (mitigation, adaptation, and finance) and by country. Different ways of approaching this will be successful in different contexts.
- TAI already has all of the capabilities and most of the tools that are needed to intervene meaningfully. Tools and capabilities include: (1) convening/consultation functions, (2) assessment functions, and (3) advocacy functions.

Prior to breaking out into small groups, participants were asked to respond to the three observations, and to propose an approach for advocating access rights in the climate change agenda. Additionally, partners were asked to address how reporting and assessment might work in climate change.

Some partners agreed that TAI should start looking at climate change at the national level and summarize results at the regional level, but there was little consensus on the degree to which existing TAI tools needed to be adapted to address climate change.

Next Steps
Partners agreed to continue to build the capacity of the network to address climate change issues. This included:

- TAI partners should engage with the Governance of Forests Initiative and the Electricity Governance Initiative, where possible.
- The TAI water assessment tool looks at existing agencies. This could tested as a tool to evaluate institutions responsible for addressing climate change.
- WRI will prepare an information memorandum for the April 2009 Core Team meeting on the areas of public administration (and justice) that fall under the rubric of climate change. The memo will identify existing and potential mechanisms for information, participation and justice within those national bodies responsible for enacting and carrying out climate policy.
- The Core Team will endorse a national-level approach to assessing access and climate change.
- The Core Team will identify the scope of climate activity within the

TAI network, and will define deliverables for fundraising.
- Based on the recommendations of the Core Team, the TAI Secretariat and Core Team may lead research into new tools, focus on disseminating new ideas, or may choose not to engage on this issue further.

Discussion of Core Team Meeting

The last official session of the day offered partners a space to make suggestions for energizing the network, making it more effective and improving governance. The Core Team presented next steps for the network and introduced, Ritwick Dutta of LIFE, India, the new Core Team partner for South Asia.

Partners asked Core Team members to talk about private sector engagement in the context of TAI and how TAI partners might be able to influence current business models or build partnerships through existing corporate social responsible networks and existing ISO 1400 standards.

One Core Team member cautioned that some businesses are only interested in access to information to increase their profits and that some businesses seem less interested in public participation and access to justice.

Partners also asked how TAI coalitions could engage governments more. Coalition partners from Thailand and Honduras shared how their coalitions have worked with the government on forming recommendations and engaging them in the stakeholder process.

The last major point that arose was on TAI's assessment practices and whether partners can have sector assessments before national assessments. Partners were encouraged to do full assessments before sector assessments.

Closing Day 3- Wrap Up and Goodbyes

For the last half an hour of the gathering partners were presented with two questions from Michael Ewing, IT-Sligo, Ireland:
1. Was the gathering convened in an organized and effective manner? and
2. Did the meeting achieve its aims?

Partners were given the opportunity to respond on a wall chart where they anonymously placed stickers that best represented their views.

Overall, partners felt the meeting had achieved its aims and was a success. There was hope from all participants that the energy from the meeting would not dissipate after leaving Ireland.

Partners thanked our hosts, everyone at IT-Sligo, especially Michael Ewing and Magnus Amajirionwu and the TAI Secretariat,

particularly Linda Shaffer for all the preparation. Some partners expressed personal sentiments about the meeting.

Annex 1: List of Participants

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Annex 2: Global Gathering Agenda

The 2nd TAI Global Gathering Agenda-

Day 1 - Gathering Momentum

9-10.30am
1. Welcome - Introductions – Agenda setting – Ground rules (Facilitator: Michael Ewing, TAI Ireland)
    Objective: Putting names to faces, breaking the ice, setting the pace, agreeing on what we want to do, sharing expectations and setting the ground rules. (90 Minutes)
        Michael Ewing
        Jeremy Wates, Secretary Aarhus Convention Secretariat, Geneva
        Senator Dan Boyle deputy leader of Seanad Eireann (the Senate of Ireland
        Professor Scott, Professor of Communications at IT-Sligo
        Lalanath de Silva, Director TAI

10.30am-12noon
2. Celebrating success stories (Facilitator: Andrea Sanhueza, *Participa*, Chile)
    Objective: An opportunity for partners who have achieved success with "change on the ground" to share their stories, inspire others to follow suit and set the stage for our community of practice discussions that follow later. (90 Minutes)
    Influencing Thailand's Official Information Act.
    Somrudee Nicro, Thailand Environment Institute (TEI)

    A series of actions around a TV serie
    Juan Carlos Carrillo Fuentes, Iniciativa de Acceso México / Centro Mexicano de Derecho Ambiental

    Above And Beyond the Majority: Some Anecdotes from TAI Activities in Cameroon
    Augustine B. Njamnshi, Bioresources Development and Conservation Programme Cameroon & National Coordinator The Access Initiative Cameroon

    Let Justice be Done - Deduru Oya sandmining
    Arjuna Seneviratne, Green movement, Sri Lanka

12noon-12.30pm
3. *Voice & Choice – the big messages – the big hurdles* (Facilitator: Joseph Foti, WRI, USA)
    Objective: Present the main messages and findings of Voice and Choice: Opening the Door to Environmental Democracy *(the "TAI Global Report"), discuss how it shapes our future agenda and how it can be used in powerful ways in our work.* (30 Minutes)
        Joseph Foti, WRI

12.30-1.30pm
LUNCH *(During lunch TAI Mexico partners will screen an episode from a recent TV series they produced.)*

1.30-2pm

4. Building communities of practice (Facilitator: Lalanath de Silva, WRI, USA)

    Objectives: Introduce partners to the three communities of practice (Access law and practice, Public participation AND Poverty/access/environment) and their advantages and usefulness, provide an opportunity for partners who are active in the communities already to recount their experiences and inspire others to become active. (30 Minutes)

    > *Dr. Csaba Kiss, EMLA, Hungary*
    > *Michael Ewing, TAI Ireland*
    > *Ritwick Dutta, LIFE, India*
    > *Daniel Barragán, Ecuador*
    > *Ram Charitra Shah, Pro Public, Nepal*
    > *Augustine Njamnshi, BDCPC Cameroon*

2-4pm

5. Communicating Our Work (Facilitator: Magnus Amajirionwu, TAI Ireland)

    Objectives: To understand the power of "story telling" as a central aspect of our communication with partners, governments, donors and communities. To learn the components of good stories and to tell those stories.

    > *Professor Una Mannion, IT Sligo*

4-5.30pm (COMPUTER LAB)

6. Working the new website (training on computers) (Facilitator: Daniel Barragán, CEDA, Ecuador & Monika Kerdeman, WRI, USA)

    Objectives: familiarize partners with the new interactive TAI website and train partners how best to use it to their advantage and populate it with content. In this session partners will learn more about:
    - *Benefits the new website can offer*
    - *How to use the site*
    - *How to post information* (90 Minutes)

7-12am   Dinner and Irish Ceilidh Dance (Glass House Hotel Banquet Hall)

Join us for a sit down dinner followed by traditional Irish dancing. If you are in Ireland, you must learn to dance Ceilidh (pronounced /Kaylee/). If you have ever seen "Riverdance" then you have seen a form of Ceilidh. Ceilidh literally means "party" and this is exactly what we will be doing – partying! We will have someone teach us to dance, leading us through the steps with the accompaniment of live Irish music. Please don't miss this chance to relax after a long day of meetings, and to learn about Irish culture!

Day 2 - Effecting Change

9-9.45am
1. TAI Core team & Secretariat Report (Facilitator: Linda Shaffer, WRI)

> *Objective: Opportunity for TAI participants to learn more about the activities and roles of the Core Team. Members of the Core Team will present highlights from their recent meeting and take questions. The Secretariat will present the newly published report, The Access Initiative 2006-2008. (45 Minutes)*
>> *Linda Shaffer, WRI, USA*
>> *TAI Core Team Representative*

9.45-10.15am
2. The DGF Grant, Goals for the Year and Reporting. (Facilitator: Elias Mwashiuya, LEAT, Tanzania)

> *Objectives: To inform partners of the Development Grants Facility (World Bank) grant received by WRI for TAI activities. A summary of the scope of the grant and achievements from the first year will be presented. The Request for Proposals for 2009 will also be presented as well as criteria for selection of projects. A separate Q&A session for grant proposals will be held on Day 3. (30 Minutes)*
>> *Linda Shaffer, WRI, USA*

10.15am-11.45am
3. Parallel Working Groups (2):

> (1) Collectively developing advocacy tools (Facilitator: Lina Marcela Munoz, Universidad Rosario, Colombia)
> *Objectives: Using two examples from the community of practice, demonstrate how some partners have begun to develop useful advocacy tools, inspire other partners to join and help develop other advocacy tools, prioritize a list of such tools and assign lead responsibilities. (90 Minutes)*
>> *Ritwick Dutta, LIFE, India*
>> *Joseph Foti, WRI, USA*
>> *Richard Ingwe, CRADLE, Nigeria*
>> *Lalanath de Silva, WRI, USA*

> (2) The TAI Citizens Toolkit/Rapid assessment (Facilitator: Patricia Abed, IDEA, Paraguay)
> *Objectives: A presentation by the Thailand Environment Institute (Somrudee Nicro) on the Thai Citizen Toolkit they developed based on the TAI method and its usefulness and effectiveness in the hands of local citizens. A discussion will follow to determine if the development of such a Citizen Toolkit would be valuable to the TAI network. (90 Minutes)*
>> *Dr. Somrudee Nicro, TEI, Thailand*

11.45 a.m. – 1 p.m.
LUNCH

1-2.30pm
4. Development, Access and Aid Effectiveness (Facilitator: Dr. Csaba Kiss, EMLA, Hungary)

Objective: A presentation and discussion on the collaborative work of the European and developing country partners on development, access rights and aid effectiveness. (90 Minutes)
> Kordian Kochanowicz, IGR, Poland
> Elias Mwashiuya, LEAT, Tanzania

2.30-5.30
5. Bonding outdoors at Lissadell with Joe McGowan, an Irish historian, folklorist and author specializing in the history of Sligo (A bus will pick us up at 2:30 in front of this building)

> *Objective: Networks thrive because of the strength of personal friendships and bonds – we are human first, before we are advocates, researchers and TAI partners! This activity will help foster personal relationships. We will journey just outside Sligo to the Lissadell House and nearby monuments as Joe McGowan tells of the history of the area. (Informal. Please bring a rain jacket or umbrella and walking shoes)* (3 hours)

> <u>About Lissadell House</u>
> Lissadell is a gorgeous estate that holds an important place in Irish culture, women's history, and democracy. It was the childhood home of Constance Markievicz, her sister Eva Gore Booth and her brother Josslyn Gore Booth. Constance was one of the leaders of the 1916 Rising, and was the first woman to be elected to Dail Eireann (the House of Representatives of Ireland). She also served as Minister for Labour, becoming the first woman minister in a modern European democracy. Constance was the first woman to be elected to the House of Commons at Westminster, London (where she declined to take her seat). Eva was a poet of distinction and an active suffragist. Josslyn made Lissadell one of the premier horticultural estates in Europe. Sligo born poet W. B. Yeats was friends with the Gore Booth family. He stayed at Lissadell in 1883 and 1884, immortalizing the family and their estate in his poetry.

5:30-9pm
6. Dinner and Personal Story-telling (personal anecdotes over post dinner gathering) (Facilitator: Tomas Severino, IA-Mex)

> *Objectives: Our inspiration comes from deep within us and from those others who are a beacon to us. An after dinner story telling session where senior and junior TAI partners share personal stories of why they became advocates or researchers or TAI folk. After some initial stories, the floor will be open to all who want to share. (Informal, location to be determined)*

Day 3 - Meeting Challenges

9-10.30am
1. Poverty discussion paper & Poverty sensitized toolkit (Facilitator: Ritwick Dutta, LIFE, India)
    Objectives: Presentation of a paper prepared by the TAI secretariat on poverty-environment and access based on five poverty-access studies done by TAI partners as part of the poverty sensitization of the TAI toolkit. A discussion will follow leading to a determination of some concrete steps that TAI can take to increase the voice and influence of the poor in environmental decision-making. Present the poverty sensitized TAI Assessment Toolkit and demonstrate how it functions and how it impacts assessment results and finding. (90 Minutes)
    Joseph Foti, WRI, USA
    Partners to be confirmed may include:
        Loraine Gatlabayan, Ateneo School of Government, Philippines
        Nchunu Justice Sama, FEDEV, Cameroon
        Patricia Abed, IDEA, Paraguay
        Cirilo Otero, CIPA, Nicaragua

10.30-12noon
2. Reporting Outcomes and DGF Grant Application Process (Facilitator: Andrea Sanhueza, *Participa*, Chile)
    Objectives: To discuss fundraising opportunities and a new outcome reporting system that captures the TAI success stories. An opportunity for partners to seek clarifications on the DGF grants opportunities. (90 Minutes)
    Linda Shaffer, WRI, USA

12-1pm
    LUNCH

1-2.30pm
3. Parallel Working Groups (3):

    (1) Forestry and Water Governance & TAI (Facilitator: Augustine Njamnshe, BDCPC Cameroon)
    Objective: introduce the TAI water assessment toolkit and discuss ways partners can use it in their countries. Introduce EMLA's experience with using the TAI toolkit in the Forest sector (Dr. Csaba Kiss) and WRI Forest Governance Initiative and discuss possible TAI partner involvement. (90 Minutes)
        Dr. Csaba Kiss, EMLA, Hungary
        Lalanath de Silva, WRI, USA

    (2) Climate Change and Access Rights (Facilitator: *Teresa Flores, PRODENA, Bolivia (To be confirmed)*
    Objectives: To identify which processes and what tools the TAI Network can use to ensure access in ongoing climate change policy and practice. (90 Minutes)
        Joseph Foti, WRI, USA

2.30-3.30pm
4. Discussion of Core team & Secretariat Report. (Facilitator: Linda Shaffer, WRI, USA)

Objective: To provide partners with a space to make suggestions for energizing the network, making it more effective and improving governance. Next steps for the Core team, Secretariat and Network. (60 minutes)

> *Dr. Csaba Kiss, EMLA, CT member for Europe*
> *Dr. Somrudee Nicro, TEI, CT member for S.E. Asia*
> *Ritwick Dutta, Life, CT member for S. Asia*
> *Tomas Severino, Juan Carlos Carillo (IA-Mex, Mexico) & Andrea Sanhueza, Participa, Chile, CT members for Latin America*
> *Arthur Bainomugisha, ACODE, CT member for Africa*
> *Lalanath de Silva, WRI, CT member for North America, Middle East and Pacific.*

3.30-4pm

5. Closing (Facilitator: Michael Ewing & Lalanath de Silva)

> *Objectives: An opportunity for partners to share reflections on the meeting, to thank our hosts and to bring the meeting to a close.* (30 minutes)

Annex 3: TAI Network Governance

TAI Network Governance					
	TAI Secretariat	**Core Team (CT)[i]**	**Regional leads**	**National Leads**	**National Partners**
Governance and management					
Network Governance/ Coordination	Coordinate CT processes	Support CT processes	Regional Processes	Leads National processes[ii]	Support national processes
Expansion	…	Sets priorities	Recruits new countries	…	…
Fundraising	Global	…	Regional	National	National
Assessment Process					
TAI Assessment	Support	…	Support	Leads implementation	Implement
Assessment Review[iii]	Facilitates	Review & Endorse	Lead & Review	Coordinates national advisory panel, incorporates comments	…
Regional Report	Review	…	Writing, coordination, publication	Review, Contribution	Contribution
Global Report	Writing, coordination, publication	…	Review, contribution	Contribution	Contribution
Growing the Network					
TAI Training	Training trainers, develop training materials	…	Train	Receive training, provide trainers	Receive training
Deepening Influence					
New TAI tools / TAI Methodology / Research	Develop	Sets priorities, Develops, Approves	Develop, Deploy	Support Develop, Pilot testing,	Support Develop, Pilot testing, implementation

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[i] This column refers to the CT in its role as a steering committee. The 'regional leads' column refers to the CT members in their roles as heads of national coalitions.

[ii] 'National processes' include coalition-building, assessment, review and advocacy

[iii] 'Assessment review' includes Facilitates includes translations, review. For a full list of duties, refer to Global Review of TAI National Assessments (Revised 2007).

				implementation	
TAI Website	Develop, administer, content	Advise development	Provides content, administers regional site	Provides content	Provides content
Outreach/ Advocacy Actions[iv]	Represent TAI at international processes	…	Represent TAI at regional processes	Represent TAI at national & local processes	Support TAI at national & local processes

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[iv]   'Outreach' includes lobbying, targeted publications, and presentations

Annex 4: Governance of Forests Indicator Matrix

Forest Governance Initiative	A2I Transparency	PP Inclusiveness	A2J Accountability	Coordination	Capacity
Policy					
Laws + regulations					
Plans / Planning EIA					
Permits / concessions					
Rights / creation contracts termination					
Tax / Fiscal measures					
Penalties / Sanctions					
Enforcement					
Monitoring					
Responsibility					
Consultation mechanisms					
Institutions?					