Category: **Obligation to Make Environmental Information Public**

Sub-Category: **Online Tools and Applications related to Access to Environmental Information**

Name of Good Practice: **Tarkkailija (“Observer”) - Web-Based Environmental Information Observer** .

Key Words: Access to Information, Internet, Technology, Participation

Implementing Actors: National Ministry: Ministry of Environment of Finland; Civil Society Organisation: SYKE (Finnish Environment Institute)

Location: Finland

Description: Tarkkailija, a map-based web application launched in 2009, seeks to increase access to information regarding environmental and land use projects in different areas and cities by enabling interested parties to identify themes or locations that they would like the application to monitor. Once users specify the habitat, theme or plan that they would like to monitor, the web application informs the users whenever any new information relevant to their interests becomes available. For example, according to the application’s web site, a user may identify a habitat to monitor, such as a park or a lake, or a planned project, such as the construction of a new road. Users can also monitor themes or areas of interest, such as proposed green space zoning or the development of bicycle lanes.

Tarkkailija collects information, including news articles, permit applications, and environmental review documents, from over 400 websites, including data from all Finnish municipalities and government websites, the media, and other network services. It provides users with access to information on environmentally relevant projects that they might otherwise be unaware of and allows users to take action at the right time. The project is based on the notion that if individuals have access to and are capable of following the environmental decision making process from an early stage, their rights related to participation are better protected

Tarkkailija is part of e-services initiative that the Ministry of Environment, Housing and Construction is implementing in the field of living and constructed environment in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance’s e-services and accelerating democracy project (SADe). SADe is comprised of eight key projects that seek to facilitate access to public information using online tools, including a project in the area of e-Participation and the environment.

Further Information: The project’s web page, <https://www.etarkkailija.fi/app/index.html#/index>; <http://www.leiki.com/what-is-happening-in-your-local-environment-stay-tuned-by-using-leikis-smartsearch-in-the-observer-service-now-live>.