

**15th Annual International Sustainable Development Research Conference
July 5-8, 2009**

***"Taking up the Global Challenge: Analysing the implementation of
innovations and governance for Sustainable Development"***

CALL FOR PAPERS

Track nr 5D: *Participation in local action for sustainable development*

Track chair: Otwin Renn (Center of Technology Assessment, Germany), dr.
Simon Bell (Open University, UK), dr. Frank van Laerhoven (Utrecht
University, the Netherlands)

In broad strokes, the title of this track – participation in local action for sustainable development – refers to the involvement of people that are in whatever way affected by local actions with an impact on the environment in decisions related to the development and implementation of these actions. Participation has been thought of as a method in a context of projects, programs or policies. One could think for example of public participation as an innovative manner of decision-making to deal with uncertainty and risks in a context of efforts to achieve sustainable development. Public participation has also been used as a deliberative-analytical method to solve problems related to "siting" or potentially conflictive use of natural resources in a given territory. Participation however, has also been perceived as a goal in itself, and tied to concepts related to equality, democracy, and decentralization: In this sense, participation would be akin to the idea of "putting the last first" as formulated by Chambers, to fiscal federalism as defined by Oates, and to the interpretation of local governance as expressed by Oakerson. Approached from this perspective, participation can be seen as a means to empower constituents to participate in the effective, efficient, and equitable co provision and coproduction of the public goods and services that are required to guarantee sustainable development.

This track will review primary and secondary materials that attempt to assess the potential merits and drawbacks of participation – understood in either one of the two ways described above – in a context of efforts to achieve sustainable development. The focus will be on local and regional experiences. We invite academic as well as practice-inclined papers, since we explicitly wish to address the issue of integrating scientific knowledge and public experiences. We are particularly keen to encourage papers which address the issues and problems of implementing participation; assess the robustness of existing participatory practices; evaluate the rate of uptake of participation as a reality and not merely a rhetoric; explore the society-wide uptake of participation for sustainable development; report about success or failures of participatory processes in terms of process quality, outputs and outcomes; review the experience of participation for sustainable development in Asian, African and South American locations, and; critically weigh up the applicability of dominant western economic, social and cultural mindsets in the expression of the global participatory sustainable development agenda.

Please look at the detailed instructions and deadlines for submitting your abstract and paper, using the Submission & guidelines button at the left side.