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# **Applicability of the participatory procedure in the search for sites for deep geological repositories to other state sectoral planning procedures**

Sub-project to the research project  
“Participatory waste disposal policy”

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## Summary

This report looks into the extent to which the regional participatory procedures used in the sectoral plan for deep geological repositories (SGR) could be applied to other state sectoral plans. It was drawn up as part of the research project into “Participatory waste disposal policy”. In addition to the SGR the focus is on the sectoral plans for traffic, partial infrastructure rail (SIS, German), traffic, partial infrastructure roads (SIN), air transport infrastructure (SIL), for transmission lines (SÜL), the army (SPM) and for asylum (SPA). The objective of the report is to evaluate whether an informal participation procedure for the people affected by a proposal – as in the regional participation procedure in the SGR – could also be applied to the other six state sectoral plans. Currently, there is no stipulation for informal participation of the people affected by a proposal in any other sectoral plan other than in the SGR. In the main the population only participates through the formal *Information and Participation of the Population* procedure stipulated by article 19 of the spatial planning ordinance and through the planning approval procedure that follows the sectoral plan procedure.

To study the potential for adopting the same informal participation mechanism used in the SGR in other state sectoral plans, conditions were established whereby the degree of the characteristics of the condition manifest would either favour or hinder implementation of a broad participation procedure or would mean participation of the people affected by a proposal would either be required or be non-essential. The six conditions were drawn up on the basis of sectoral plan documentation and interviews with persons responsible for sectoral plans. Thus, reorganisation of a sectoral plan infrastructure (as opposed to expansion of the plan), an enlarged geographical scope (as opposed to reduced scope), a high potential for conflict in society and intense public interest in the purpose of the sectoral plan (as opposed to a low degree of interest), a low number of locations or projects, which would be regulated by a sectoral plan (as opposed to a large number), willingness to pay for the participation procedure on the part of the infrastructure operator (as opposed to a lack of willingness to pay), as well as low external and internal time pressure with respect to implementation of an infrastructure project are all conditions that could, and as the case may be should, favour participation in state sectoral plans by the people affected by a proposal in the form of informal participation in shaping the sectoral plan.

Analysis of the degree to which each condition is manifest in the various sectoral plans leads to the following conclusions: Neither the condition concerning geographical scope nor the number of locations nor the willingness to pay on the part of an infrastructure operator is manifest optimally in the plans studied (exception: the sectoral plan for asylum, which has a relatively large geographical scope). The potential for conflict in society and public interest in the topics are also barely manifest in the case of some sectoral plans and if there is interest it tends to be limited to local interest. Only time pressure, which is barely or only moderately manifest, speaks in favour of informal participation on the part of the public for the five sectoral plans for traffic, partial infrastructure rail (SIS), traffic, partial infrastructure roads (SIN), air transport infrastructure (SIL), transmission lines (SÜL), and for the army (SPM). In contrast, time pressure is great from external sources in the case of the sectoral plan for asylum (SPA). However, the prevalent medium to low time pressure does not seem to be sufficient grounds for establishing an informal participation procedure in these sectoral plans.

In addition to the SGT, the sectoral plans for transmission lines and for asylum are the only plans which show a number of optimal manifestations of the six conditions: In the case of the latter sectoral plans, new infrastructure has to be built and a greater geographical scope results. Further, there is potential for conflict in society and public interest, and the number of locations for which a participation procedure could be established is relatively low and easy to oversee. However, the condition of willingness to pay on the part of the infrastructure operator is not optimally manifest as is the case with the other sectoral plans. The sectoral plan for asylum is subject to great time pressure.

The SGT is the only state sectoral plan in which an informal participation procedure is foreseen or included as a possibility in the conceptual part – apart from the formal inclusion of the population stipulated in spatial planning law and ordinances. This seems to be a significant condition relevant to whether or not a participatory procedure for the people affected by a proposal is carried out and also paid for. This is directly linked to the willingness to pay of the infrastructure operator which is unique in the case of the SGT and is either not present or barely present in the other state sectoral plans. The degree to which this condition is manifest is likely an important reason for the lack of an informal participatory procedure in parallel to the formal public procedure which takes place in the other state sectoral plans

Finally, it has to be said that every sectoral plan involves a specific approach with its own momentum and each and every sectoral plan also has to be seen as an individual case. The regional participation carried out as part of the SGT cannot be readily applied to any other sectoral plan. However, specific aspects and ideas from this plan could definitely be incorporated in other sectoral plans if these plans fulfilled the conditions which would favour carrying out a participation procedure for the people affected by a proposal and would make it appropriate. In the case of sectoral plans with great potential for conflict in society which are the focus of intense public interest with a larger geographical scope, involving the people affected by a proposal in participation as early and on as broad a basis as possible is indispensable to a sectoral plan procedure. In such cases more than simple information events are required; rather there should be an open exchange of information in which the people affected by a proposal can voice their concerns, make demands and receive feedback about their concerns.