

***Local Agenda 21 in Denmark
State of implementation
in late 1998***

***Ministry of Environment and Energy, Denmark
Spatial Planning Department***

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State of implementation in late 1998

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Paper

250 g Cyclus Offset (Cover)
115 g Cyclus Offset
100% recycled

Printing

Levison+Johnsen+Johnsen a/s, Copenhagen

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ISBN 87-601-8894-4

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Published October 2000

Printed in Denmark

Preface

The Ministry of Environment and Energy conducted a nationwide questionnaire survey of the local Agenda 21 activities of Denmark's counties and municipalities in late 1998. The purpose was to follow the trends in the dissemination of local Agenda 21 work in Denmark.

This was the second nationwide survey of how Denmark's local and regional authorities are implementing Agenda 21, the United Nations programme of action on sustainable development adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992. A report was prepared (in Danish only) based on the first nationwide survey conducted in late 1996. That report was part of Denmark's contribution to the United Nations General Assembly Special Session in June 1997 to evaluate Agenda 21 implementation. The Special Session emphasized the importance of following up Agenda 21 in individual countries.

Based on this, we are pleased to report that this report shows clear progress in the number of Denmark's counties and municipalities that have initiated local Agenda 21 activities. We hope that the report can assist in motivating the counties and municipalities that are not yet active to initiate local Agenda 21 activities. This will also contribute positively to progress for the next reports to the United Nations for the comprehensive review of Agenda 21 implementation in 2002.

This report describes the results of the survey, compares the results with those of the survey in 1996 and provides analysis. The report also summarizes the dissemination of local Agenda 21 internationally.

The Danish Technological Institute carried out the survey and prepared this report as consultants for the Ministry of Environment and Energy, and the content, assessments, conclusions and recommendations expressed in the report do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Ministry.

The English version of the report includes a few changes from the Danish version. One reason is the legislation adopted in Denmark on local Agenda 21 in February 2000. The general deadline for information in this report is late 1998.

It is important to emphasize for the readers of this report that local Agenda 21 in Denmark is largely characterized by activities for sustainable development that extend beyond the numerous legally mandated initiatives related to nature protection, environment and planning carried out by Denmark's counties and municipalities.

*Ministry of Environment and Energy
Spatial Planning Department*

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Summary

This report describes the state of implementation and the content of local Agenda 21 in Denmark in late 1998. Local Agenda 21 is a concept from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 that urges local authorities in all the Member States of the United Nations to implement the ideas of sustainability in each community by undertaking a consultative process with their populations and by taking a comprehensive perspective including not only environmental factors but also economic and social ones. Previously published material describes local Agenda 21 in detail.

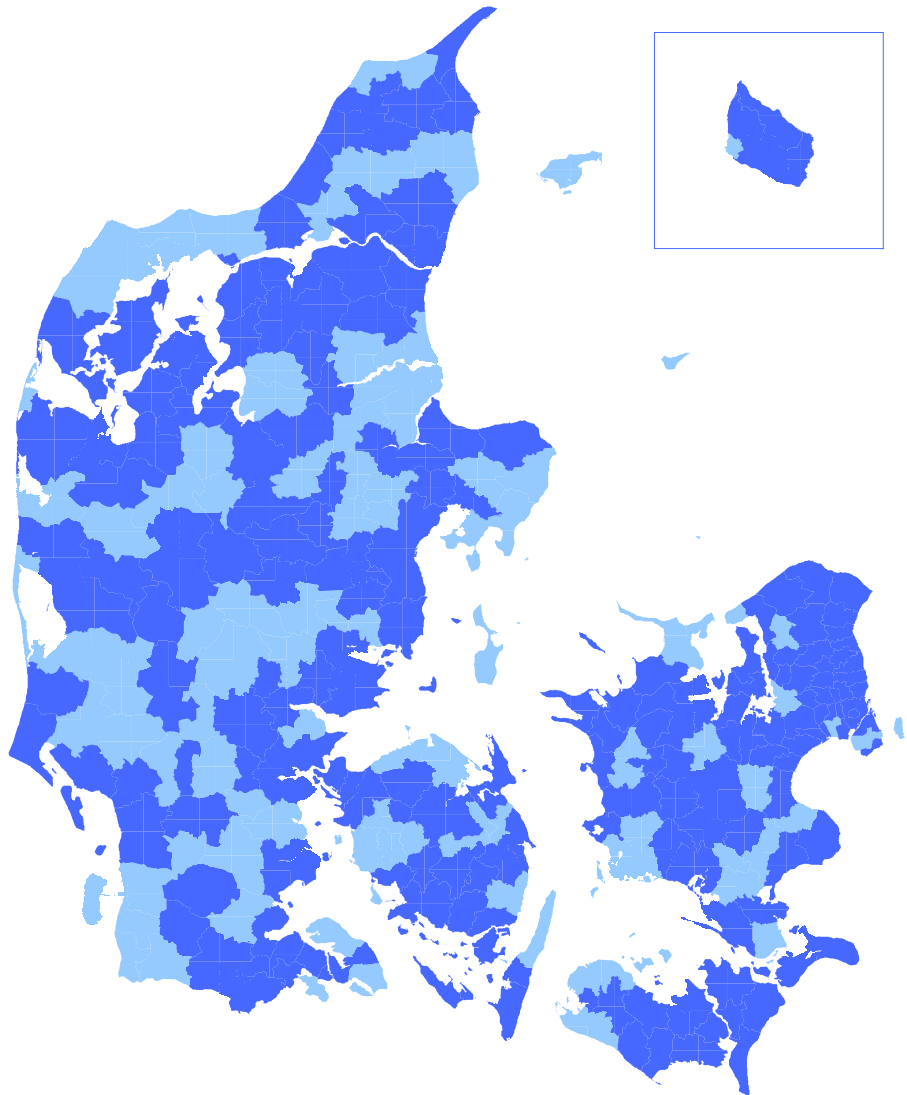
A survey similar to the one presented here was conducted in late 1996. The survey found that 50% of Denmark's municipalities and counties had initiated local Agenda 21 activities. This met the target for 1996 set at the Earth Summit.

The questionnaire used in 1998 is mostly identical to the 1996 questionnaire, which means that the results can be compared directly. The response rate was 100% in 1996 and 1998 for the question of whether the county or municipality had begun working on a local Agenda 21. This is very unusual and shows the significance accorded local Agenda 21.

The most important conclusions and recommendations from the 1998 survey are as follows.

- Two hundred counties and municipalities were active in 1998 versus 145 in 1996, an increase from 50% to 69% of Denmark's 289 counties and municipalities. The active municipalities covered 84% of the population in 1998 versus 71% in 1996.
- The municipalities and counties that were already active in 1996 developed their local Agenda 21 activities qualitatively through such means as enhancing public participation, providing public information and providing financial support to activities initiated by citizens and organizations.
- Most of the municipalities and counties expected local Agenda 21 activity to increase in 1999, which shows that local Agenda 21 still has momentum.
- An advanced group of 29 municipalities and counties with numerous local Agenda 21 projects has organized the process much better than have the other municipalities and counties. The survey thereby provides the basis for identifying and disseminating best practices.
- Analysis of the implementation of local Agenda 21 outside Denmark shows that, as was hoped at the Earth Summit, local Agenda 21 has developed into a global reference for activity supporting sustainable development. This also applies to developing countries and newly industrialized countries.

- International efforts to more precisely define the form and content of a local Agenda 21 are in good accordance with the five characteristics defined in Denmark, which are therefore still useful as benchmarks.
- Based on the results of the survey, the current main strategy is recommended to be continued based on voluntary activity, information and networking between interested partners, perhaps with a written strategy for the continuing local Agenda 21 work, as Norway has carried out with good results. A realistic target is to get half the municipalities and counties that are not yet active to become active before Denmark reports to the United Nations in relation to the comprehensive review of Agenda 21 implementation in 2002. The following challenges are recommended to be taken up within the current main strategy:
 - Many municipalities and counties do not use the name local Agenda 21 in connection with their activities, which weakens the campaign.
 - Despite the progress so far, public mobilization is still too weak.
 - An Agenda 21–inspired method of involving businesses actively in local Agenda 21 is needed.



The municipalities in Denmark active in local Agenda 21 in late 1998 are shown in a dark shade.

1. Introduction

Denmark's local authorities, its counties and municipalities, are responsible for implementing local Agenda 21.

Local Agenda 21 is based on Chapter 28 of Agenda 21, which emphasizes that local authorities have an important role in implementing Agenda 21 in local communities in cooperation with the local population. Local Agenda 21 in Denmark builds on many years of environmental initiatives by local authorities, companies, organizations and individuals. Local Agenda 21 is developing these efforts and is reinforcing the dialogue on sustainable development. One focus is on ensuring broad cooperation and solutions. The efforts are locally based and follow the principle of thinking globally and acting locally.

Local Agenda 21 is based on voluntary efforts. Nevertheless, Denmark's Folketing (parliament) adopted legislation on local Agenda 21 in February 2000 that requires the counties and municipalities to publish reports on their local Agenda 21 work at least every 4 years, and the first report before the end of 2003.

Numerous efforts in environmental strategy are being carried out at the national level. One effort of the Government of Denmark is to prepare a national strategy for sustainable development in preparation for the comprehensive review by the United Nations of Agenda 21 implementation in 2002.

Denmark's campaign to disseminate the message of the Earth Summit through local Agenda 21 started in 1994. The campaign is being carried as a partnership between the Ministry of Environment and Energy (Spatial Planning Department), the National Association of Local Authorities in Denmark and the Association of County Councils in Denmark. In 1995, this campaign published *Local Agenda 21: an introduction prepared for the counties and municipalities in Denmark*.

The first target for the campaign was to fulfil the target set by Chapter 28 of Agenda 21:

By 1996, most local authorities in each country should have undertaken a consultative process with their populations and achieved a consensus on "a local Agenda 21" for the community.

In connection with Denmark's reporting to the United Nations in spring 1997 on fulfilment of this target, the campaign group conducted the first nationwide survey on the dissemination and intensity of local Agenda 21 in late 1996. The main conclusion was that Denmark had exactly fulfilled the target that half of Denmark's counties and municipalities were to be active in local Agenda 21 by the end of 1996. The 1996 survey was documented in a report (in Danish only) by the campaign partners in 1997.

The campaign has continued since then, and the campaign partners decided to conduct a similar survey in late 1998. This report presents the results of the 1998 survey and describes the most striking changes from the 1996 results.

Chapter 2 describes the methods used in the questionnaire survey. Chapter 3 presents the responses to the individual questions and concludes with an analysis of best practices. Chapter 4, which had no comparable chapter in the 1996 report, describes and analyses the implementation of local Agenda 21 outside Denmark.

2. Methods and data collection

The questionnaire that was sent to Denmark's 14 counties and 275 municipalities on 9 November 1998 is Annex 1 to this report.

Local Agenda 21 in Denmark has five characteristics: a holistic perspective in intersectoral thinking and action; active public participation, a community thinking and acting in life cycles, a global perspective in local affairs, and a long-term perspective in local affairs. These characteristics have been used to create the framework for the questionnaire survey.

The best practices in local Agenda 21 in Denmark have been analysed by comparing the strategy and process of a group of advanced municipalities and counties with those of all other municipalities and counties. It is not considered appropriate (or necessary to achieve the aims of the analysis of best practices) to publish the names of the municipalities and counties in each group.

The response rate was 94.5% after one written reminder. This decisively strengthens the value of the conclusions and shows that the counties and municipalities generally take local Agenda 21 seriously.

One factor that was probably decisive for the high response rate was the multiple-choice format of the questionnaire and the fact that the Ministry of Environment and Energy and the two national associations of subnational authorities conducted the survey and thereby signalled the high priority given to the survey.

The questionnaire asked for examples of best practices, but the results could not be used. The conclusion is that examples of best practices need to be gathered using a separate project.

3. Results

This section presents and discusses the responses to the questionnaire. The results for each of the 20 questions are presented, and the results for the different questions are analysed to determine potential correlations between methods and results (the best practices in Denmark).

Except for questions 1 and 3, the analysis covers only the responses from the 200 counties and municipalities in Denmark (of 289 total) that are active in local Agenda 21 work. Nevertheless, the number of responses may differ from 200. Some questions encouraged multiple responses, in which the wording of the question makes this clear, and some of the 200 counties and municipalities did not respond to some questions.

The individual questions are presented as follows. The English translation of the question asked is presented in italics. The results are presented as a table and/or figure. The results are then discussed: what is interesting and what does it indicate? Comments on the methods are then made.

3.1 Results for the individual questions

1. Has the county/municipality begun working on a local Agenda 21 ?

	Municipalities		Counties		Total		Percentages	
Yes	187	(134)	13	(11)	200	(145)	69,2	(50,2)
No	88	(141)	1	(3)	89	(144)	30,8	(49,8)
Total	275	(275)	14	(14)	289	(289)	100,0	(100,0)

The percentage of counties and municipalities active in local Agenda 21 work increased from 50% in 1996 to 69% in 1998. This indicates that the national and local authorities in Denmark continued to lead an effective campaign to disseminate the Agenda 21 process from 1996 to 1998. The Danish

Technological Institute said in connection with the 1996 survey that getting two thirds of the counties and municipalities active would be a realistic target for 1998. This target was thus met and exceeded.

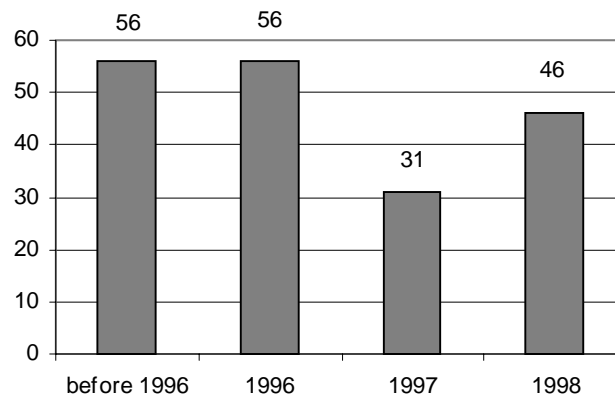
The percentage of the population covered by the active counties and municipalities increased from 71% in 1996 to 84% in 1998. The reason the proportion of the population covered is higher than the proportion of total counties and municipalities is that the populous urban municipalities have the greatest environmental problems and the most resources to apply to these problems. Nearly all urban municipalities are active in local Agenda 21 work.

The results for the key question in this survey for 1996 and 1998 can be compared directly, as the question asked is identical in wording and in the guidelines included on responding to the questionnaire. Since Agenda 21 does not define the standards required of a local Agenda 21 and consciously leaves this

interpretation to the local authorities, the survey in Denmark follows this procedure of relying on the answers of each county or municipality. This is explicitly emphasized in the guidelines for question 1, although five characteristics of a local Agenda 21 are recommended as appropriate criteria for the assessment of the county or municipality. The criteria actually used to determine what qualifies as a local Agenda 21 thus vary substantially, and there are numerous examples of municipalities that have the same environmental policies in which one defines itself as being active in local Agenda 21 work and the other does not. Nevertheless, the fact that this assessment can be arbitrary did not change from 1996 to 1998 and therefore does not affect the comparison of the two surveys, including the progress found.

The cross-national analysis in Chapter 4 discusses the issue of whether a specific set of criteria should be established to determine what should be considered a local Agenda 21.

2. *If yes, when?*



The figure shows the number of counties and municipalities starting in the years shown. After the first wave of campaign recruitment in 1994–1996 that fulfilled the target set by Agenda 21 that, by 1996, most local authorities in each country should have undertaken a consultative process with their population and achieved a consensus on a local Agenda 21 for the community, fewer became active in 1997. Nevertheless, the number increased again in 1998, which is surprising given that fewer and fewer municipalities and counties remain to become active as more and more become active.

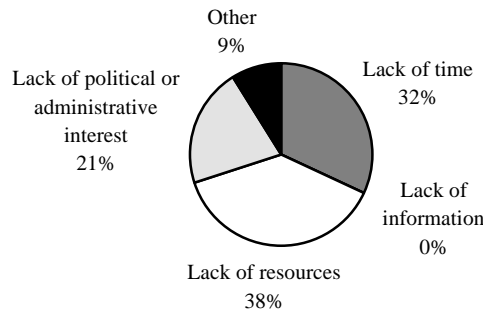
The probable main reasons for the renewed increase in the number of municipalities and counties becoming active in 1998 include:

- the debate and attention focused on local Agenda 21 created as part of the process of debating legislation on local Agenda 21 in the Folketing (parliament) session of 1997/1998;
- the critical evaluation of the local Agenda 21 efforts of municipalities and counties published in 1997 by the Danish Society for the Conservation of Nature (*Grønne realiteter*);
- the follow-up activities on Agenda 21 of other nongovernmental organi-

zations in 1997 and 1998 after the first assessment year of 1996, which probably contributed to maintaining the enthusiasm;

- a local Agenda 21 conference in Kjøge, Denmark in March 1998 gathering municipal and county councillors from throughout Denmark; and
- a local Agenda 21 start-up package disseminated by the National Association of Local Authorities and the Ministry of Environment and Energy in early 1998; this targeted the smaller municipalities who had not yet decided whether to become active and included many specific examples and detailed practical guidance.

3. *If no, why*



The reasons for not becoming active in local Agenda 21 work are distributed similarly to those in 1996: large and approximately equal portions lacking resources and lacking time, and a smaller proportion lacking political or administrative interest.

No municipality or county said that lack of information was a reason for not becoming active, which is a result of the nationwide informational campaign.

4. *Does the county's or municipality's internal and external information explicitly mention "local Agenda 21" or "Agenda 21"?*

	n	%
Yes	129	71,7
No	51	28,3
Total	180	100,0

This question was not included in the 1996 survey. The question was included because it was believed that some counties and municipalities, for educational or other reasons, decided not to use the official name local Agenda 21. The survey has confirmed this to some extent.

The problem with this (mentioned previously) is that there are no minimum standards for a local Agenda 21, and the individual county or municipality

can assess this however they want in principle. Thus, the fact that many municipalities and counties do not mention Agenda 21, and thereby fail to officially acknowledge a point of reference that is at least generally described, raises the question of the substance and accountability in the campaigns of these municipalities and counties.

Does the intensity of the environmental and other activities differ between the counties and municipalities that officially say that the activities are part of local Agenda 21 and those that do not? This was determined by correlating the individual responses to question 4 with the number of specific types of activities from questions 15 and 16. The municipalities and counties that mentioned Agenda 21 checked 55% more of the activities mentioned in these questions than did those that did not mention Agenda 21.

This association does not necessarily mean that every municipality or county that says it is active but does not use the name explicitly is engaged in wishful thinking.

Nevertheless, it is reasonable to expect that such municipalities and counties can present to the citizenry on demand the activities, initiatives and innovation the municipality or county considers have been inspired by the Earth Summit in 1992. For example, one municipality explains its negative response to question 4 as follows:

“We do not use the name Agenda 21 but work with sustainable development or the five characteristics of a local Agenda 21 in other contexts, including municipal planning.” Another example:

“We carry out many of the information measures mentioned with topics that are Agenda 21 topics but we do not consistently use the name.”

Using the official name Agenda 21 implies accountability and acknowledgement of the heritage of the Earth Summit, and Agenda 21 has been widely disseminated since 1994 in Denmark. Thus, an obvious target for Denmark’s campaign is to get all Denmark’s active municipalities and counties to use the official name in the continuing local campaigns. Uniting local communities in all countries under the same banner is crucial for the identity, effectiveness and continuing dissemination of Agenda 21 worldwide.

5. What is the current state of the implementation of the local Agenda 21 in your county or municipality? (multiple choices allowed)

	n	%
Being prepared internally	81	40,5
Dialogue with general public begun	96	48
Projects initiated	108	54
First projects completed	58	29

Question 5 is not identical with the corresponding question in the 1996 survey, but the responses can be compared in part. The responses show a positive trend since 1996. The number of active municipalities and counties that had initiated dialogue with the general public increased from 70 (48%) in

1996 to 96 (48%) in 1998, and the number that had initiated projects increased from 50 (34%) to 108 (54%).

The 1996 survey did not ask about completed projects; 58 (29%) of the active municipalities and counties said that they had completed projects in 1998.

6. How is the local Agenda 21 documented? (multiple choices allowed)

	n	%
Local Agenda 21 is merely considered as a special starting-point for the work and is not documented in written form	81	40,5
The local Agenda 21 is expressed in a separate planning document	45	22,5
The local Agenda 21 is integrated in the regional or municipal plan	90	45
The local Agenda 21 is integrated in the environmental action plan	46	23
Other	42	21

Question 6 overlaps the corresponding question from 1996. The most common form of documentation continues to be integration in the municipal or regional plan – similar to 1996, this response was twice as frequent as integration in the environmental action plan or preparation of a separate local Agenda 21.

Since the ideas that drive a local Agenda 21 are related to the specific community with its broad and diverse structure of problems, integrating a local Agenda 21 in the municipal or regional plan, which is a comprehensive spatial plan for the long-term development of a municipality or county, seems justified. Legislation passed in February 2000 amended the Planning Act to require all county and municipal councils to:

“...publish a report outlining their strategy for the county’s or municipality’s contribution to sustainable development in the 21st century containing information on how work will be carried out in a holistic, intersectoral and long-term manner and how the general public, businesses, organizations and associations will be involved in this work (a local Agenda 21). The strategy shall contain the political objectives of the county or municipal council for the future work within the following priority areas”:

1. *reducing the negative effects of human activity on the environment;*
2. *promoting sustainable urban development and regeneration;*
3. *promoting biological diversity;*
4. *involving the general public and business in local Agenda 21 work; and*
5. *promoting interaction between decisions on environmental, transport, business, social, health, educational, cultural and economic factors.*

This report is to be published for the first time by the end of 2003 and every 4 years thereafter. In addition, the Minister for Environment and Energy is required to submit a report prepared in cooperation with the associations of local authorities every 4 years to a committee of the Folketing (parliament) on local Agenda 21 work in the counties and municipalities.

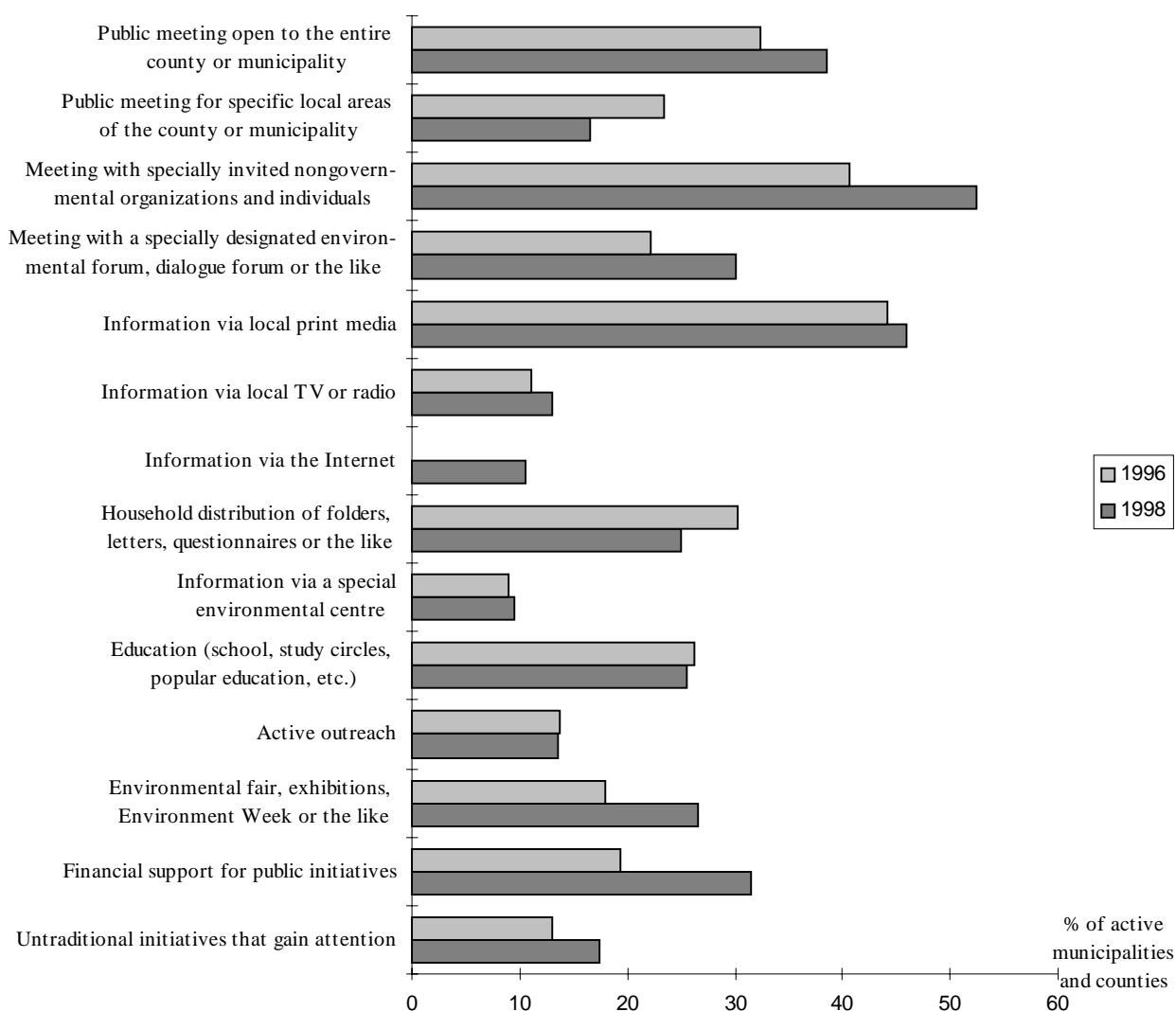
The option of responding that local Agenda 21 is merely considered as a special starting-point for the work and is not documented in written form is new in the 1998 survey. Many respondents checked this option, which is in accordance with the fact that many active municipalities and counties do not use the Agenda 21 name (question 4).

7. What has the county or municipality done to generate and sustain local attention on and interest for local Agenda 21? (multiple choices allowed) (1996)

	n		%	
	1998	(1996)	1998	(1996)
A public meeting open to the entire county or municipality	77	(47)	38,5	(32,4)
A public meeting for specific local areas of the county or municipality	33	(34)	16,5	(23,4)
A meeting with specially invited nongovernmental organizations and individuals	105	(59)	52,5	(40,7)
A meeting with a specially designated environmental forum, dialogue forum or the like	60	(32)	30,0	(22,1)
Information via local print media	92	(64)	46,0	(44,1)
Information via local TV or radio	26	(16)	13,0	(11,0)
Information via internet	21		10,5	
Household distribution of brochures, letters, questionnaires or the like	50	(44)	25,0	(30,3)
Information via a special environmental centre	19	(13)	9,5	(9,0)
Education (school, study circles, popular education, etc.)	51	(38)	25,5	(26,2)
Active outreach	27	(20)	13,5	(13,8)
An environmental fair, exhibitions, Environment Week or the like	53	(26)	26,5	(18,0)
Financial support for public initiatives	63	(28)	31,5	(19,3)
Untraditional initiatives that gain attention	35	(19)	17,5	(13,1)

The question is the same as in 1996 except that the Internet has been added as a possible channel for information.

Question 7



Municipalities and counties increased their use of 10 of 14 channels for dialogue and information from 1996 to 1998 (as a percentage of the total number active). The number of municipalities or counties that financially supported activities initiated by the general public increased from 28 in 1996 to 63 in 1998. This means that one third of all active municipalities and counties have adopted the campaign strategy of allocating money to support public initiatives. Agenda 21 meetings throughout Denmark show that this strategy is an excellent way to create local credibility for a local Agenda 21 campaign.

Many of the respondents provided more than one response. The dialogue with the local public has been based on several methods, including ones that are not part of the traditional culture of municipal and county administration in Denmark. Agenda 21's strong focus on broad participation has probably more generally contributed to increasing the dialogue between the municipalities and counties and the citizenry.

8. Has the county or municipality used other forms of dialogue as part of Agenda 21 than those previously used to promote public participation?

	n		%	
Yes	46	(33)	25,4	(25,8)
No	135	(95)	74,6	(74,2)
Total	181	(128)	100,0	(100,0)

The local Agenda 21 work has contributed to new methods of engaging in dialogue with the public in 46 municipalities and counties.

The question is the same as in 1996; the relative distribution of responses is similar.

9. To what extent do nongovernmental organizations and individuals outside the county or municipality's own organization participate in the local Agenda 21 work?

	Do not participate		Participate somewhat		Participate very actively	
	n	%	n	%	n	%r
Children under 15 years	155 (120)	77,5 (82,8)	38 (19)	19,0 (13,1)	7 (6)	3,5 (4,1)
People 15–25 years old	159 (125)	79,5 (86,2)	40 (19)	20,0 (13,1)	1 (1)	0,0 (0,7)
Individual activists	85 (91)	42,5 (62,8)	50 (27)	25,0 (18,6)	65 (27)	32,5 (18,6)
Immigrants or ethnic minorities	196 (143)	98,0 (98,6)	4 (2)	2,0 (1,4)	0 (0)	0,0 (0,0)
Unemployed people	174 (125)	87,0 (86,2)	24 (19)	12,0 (13,1)	2 (1)	1,0 (0,7)
Handicapped people	191 –	95,5 –	9 –	4,5 –	0 –	0,0 –
Environmental groups	88 (76)	44,0 (52,4)	64 (44)	32,0 (30,4)	48 (25)	24,0 (17,2)
Topic-oriented citizens' groups	131 –	65,5 –	42 –	21,0 –	27 –	13,5 –
Local councils, village associations or the like	146 –	73,0 –	40 –	20,0 –	14 –	7,0 –
Nonprofit housing associations and tenants' associations	142 (112)	71,0 (77,2)	45 (23)	22,5 (15,9)	13 (10)	6,5 (6,9)
Homeowners' associations	161 (118)	80,5 (81,4)	36 (23)	18,0 (15,9)	3 (4)	1,5 (2,7)
Industry, commerce and service	142 (113)	71,0 (77,9)	52 (29)	26,0 (20,0)	6 (3)	3,0 (2,1)
Agriculture and forestry	159 (126)	79,5 (86,9)	36 (18)	18,0 (12,4)	5 (1)	2,5 (0,7)
Trade unions	169 (136)	84,5 (93,8)	30 (8)	15,0 (5,5)	1 (1)	0,5 (0,7)
Sports clubs	171 (133)	85,5 (91,7)	27 (11)	13,5 (7,6)	2 (1)	1,0 (0,7)
Research, education and popular education	163 (122)	81,5 (84,1)	32 (15)	16,0 (10,4)	5 (8)	2,5 (5,5)
Other	31 –	15,5 –	9 –	4,5 –	6 –	3,0 –

Some respondents did not completely respond to question 9, as they did not respond for every group. The groups with no response were categorized under "Do not participate" (except for the category "Other"). This procedure was used in the 1996 survey.

Question 9 is quite comparable with the corresponding question in 1996, but associations and citizens' groups are divided into five categories in 1998 versus three in 1996. The categories "handicapped people" and "other" are also new.

The responses show a distinct positive trend in relation to 1996; all groups (except unemployed people, whose numbers declined from 1996 to 1998 because of economic growth) participated more in local Agenda 21 work. In 1996, 90 respondents said that associations and citizens' groups participated somewhat and 39 said that they were very active; these numbers increased to

227 and 105 in 1998. The increased number of categories in 1998 could have increased the numbers of positive responses, but the categories included in both surveys also increased in participation level.

Nevertheless, this clearly positive trend is based on a quite modest starting-point. The absolute numbers are not satisfactory, even in 1998. It is thus a problem that such important groups of actors as children and young adults, businesses, trade unions, sports clubs and research, education and popular education are not part of the local Agenda 21 work in 70% to 85% of the active municipalities and counties.

Thus, those responsible for local Agenda 21 campaigns should give promoting public participation high priority in the coming years.

10. Are there activities within the local Agenda 21 framework of the county or municipality that were started based on public initiative?

	n		%	
Yes	100	(45)	53,5	(33,3)
No	87	(90)	46,5	(66,7)
Total	187	(135)	100,0	(100,0)

The question is the same as in 1996. The responses demonstrate a strong increase in activities initiated by the general public: from 45 (33%) municipalities or counties in 1996 to 100 (53%) in 1998. Since a basic idea of Agenda 21 is active public participation, this is an important and positive trend that should be sustained if possible. In principle, every successful local Agenda 21 campaign includes activities initiated by the general public. The ultimate target must therefore be to reach close to 100%. A realistic target before the reports are prepared for the United Nations for the comprehensive review of Agenda 21 implementation in 2002 is 70%.

11. Does the local Agenda 21 work include cooperative projects with neighbouring counties or municipalities on problems that transcend the boundaries of the county or municipality? (189 respondents)

	n		%	
Yes	76	(50)	40,2	(36,2)
No	113	(88)	59,8	(63,8)
Total	189	(138)	100,0	(100,0)

The question is the same as in 1996, and the percentages of responses are about the same. Since local Agenda 21 focuses on people's community environments and on concrete change, focusing on increasing the percentage of affirmative responses is not crucial for the future campaign.

Local Agenda 21 projects across municipal and county boundaries seem to be most appropriate:

- when the focus is on, for example, public transport or a natural area such as a lake or fjord located in or adjacent to several municipalities or counties and joint efforts can be useful;
- when the citizens' groups also consider creating a network across the municipal or county boundary appropriate to increase effectiveness; and
- when several municipalities or counties collaborate to invest in a joint local Agenda 21 secretariat, which can give the campaign influence greater than what the individual municipalities or counties could organize themselves.

Local Agenda 21 projects that extend over a large region may be dominated by technical and bureaucratic considerations at the expense of local participation. If a municipality or county initiates such local Agenda 21 projects, it is crucial to ensure broad public participation.

Many municipalities and counties are aware of the link between community environments and the prospects of getting the public to participate and therefore consciously attempt to use district or village projects to establish a local Agenda 21 concretely based on the conditions in the local communities instead of a comprehensive common programme for the entire municipality or county.

12. How is the local Agenda 21 organized? (multiple choices allowed)

	n	%
Is there a citizens' forum or the like that serves as an established dialogue partner for the county or municipality?	60	30,0
Has the municipal or county council established a council committee to promote and follow up on the local Agenda 21?	26	13,0
Does the county or municipality have a green guide or a nature guide on the local Agenda 21 staff?	43	21,5
Has the county or municipal administration designated a local Agenda 21 staff member or coordinator?	162	81,0
Does the administration have a standing working group for the local Agenda 21	47	23,5
Are there working groups for the local Agenda 21 that include councillors, citizens and staff?	23	11,5
Total	361	-

The question is mostly new since 1996. Nevertheless, the percentage of active counties and municipalities that had designated a local Agenda 21 coordinator increased from 55% in 1996 to 81% in 1998, which implies a more structured approach and improved organization. The use of standing working groups in the municipal or county administration increased from 19% in 1996 to 23,5% in 1998.

The use of special citizens' fora or the like increased from 22% in 1996 to 30% in 1998.

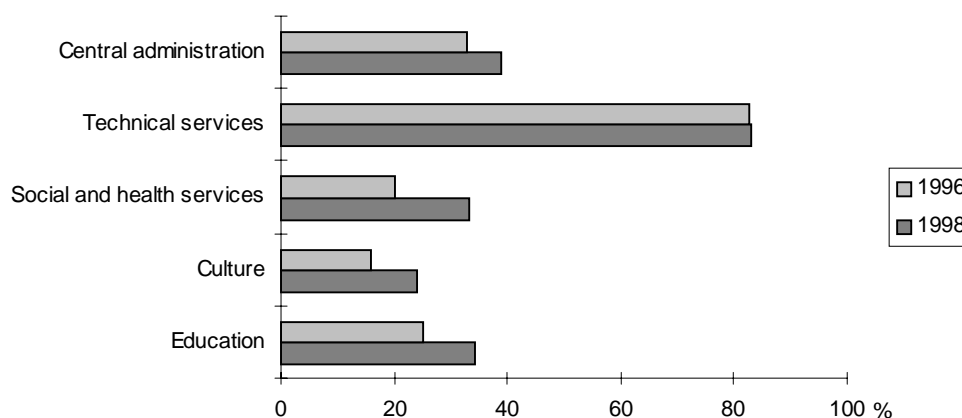
Municipal and county councils are increasingly establishing ad hoc local Agenda 21 committees and working groups that include councillors, citizens and staff, which is interesting from the perspective of governance.

13. To what extent are the individual administrative sectors involved? (187 respondents)

	Leading role		Participates actively		Participates some		Does not participate	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Central administration	36 (28)	19,2 (20,1)	37 (18)	19,8 (12,9)	63 (48)	33,7 (34,5)	51 (45)	27,3 (32,4)
Technical services	100 (77)	53,5 (55,4)	55 (38)	29,4 (27,3)	31 (20)	16,6 (14,4)	1 (4)	0,5 (2,9)
Social and health services	4 (1)	2,1 (0,7)	58 (27)	31,1 (19,4)	60 (47)	32,1 (33,8)	65 (64)	34,8 (46,0)
Culture	5 (0)	2,7 (0)	40 (22)	21,4 (15,8)	67 (52)	35,8 (37,4)	75 (65)	40,1 (46,8)
Education	1 (0)	0,5 (0)	63 (35)	33,7 (25,2)	70 (50)	37,4 (36,0)	53 (54)	28,4 (38,8)

Not all 200 active municipalities and counties completed question 13 in full. The responses are considered to be representative and the numbers are therefore rounded up to 187 for each individual sector.

Question 13



The question is the same as in 1996. The responses show that the balance between the central administration and the technical services did not change from 1996 to 1998. The other sectors had begun to participate actively in more municipalities and counties in 1998, however, and have taken on a leading role in 10 municipalities and counties.

The stronger participation of other administrative sectors is very desirable given the intersectoral focus of Agenda 21. Sustaining this trend must be given high priority.

14. Have funds been allocated to the following activities? (multiple choices allowed)

	n	%
Information and campaigns for the general public on local Agenda 21	87	43,5
Information and campaigns for companies on local Agenda 21	25	12,5
Local Agenda 21 activities initiated by citizens' groups	71	35,5
Education and orientation of administrative staff	60	30,0
Total	243	-

This question is new. The responses confirm the belief that many counties and municipalities are allocating funds for these purposes. The relatively low priority given to information for companies can be a problem and may result from general uncertainty as to the role of business in local Agenda 21. The push for environmentally sound technology in business has now been sustained for more than a decade, and this is more or less required by law in Denmark. A new Agenda 21 name tag on this activity does not change the content of this activity. The question is therefore which new vantage points can justify business participation in local Agenda 21 work.

The environmental efforts of most companies are very hierarchical. One possibility is to take a supplementary grassroots viewpoint on environmental protection, just as the municipalities and counties are doing by supplementing their formalized and hierarchical environmental services with the popular mobilization of local Agenda 21. For a business, this would mean that interested staff would be encouraged and supported in their efforts to implement minor and major improvements in the local environment and that staff would be even more strongly encouraged to participate in the environmental management of the business. The holistic and intersectoral basis of local Agenda 21 also makes sense in companies, which have a long tradition of integrating policy on the physical environment and the working environment. This comprehensive way of thinking, which is often summarized in local Agenda 21 campaigns as the quality of life, can easily be transferred to the world of business.

Many companies that already promote environmentally sound technology and prepare environmental reports will ask, justifiably, what local Agenda 21 can add to this. Local Agenda 21 can add a strategy oriented towards more participation that can strengthen the process of improving the environment and people's quality of life through dialogue and mobilization.

If one takes a positive view of the fact that businesses seem to be ignored in local Agenda 21, it could be claimed that the priorities set within a given budget are in accordance with Agenda 21's focus on lifestyles and the consumption and behaviour of individual families. This is uncharted territory that has not yet been targeted by the public authorities (except, perhaps, for energy conservation) and that therefore requires special initial efforts and focused resources.

15. Has the county or municipality initiated or been involved in projects or activities under the local Agenda 21 name that have the following purposes or in which the following result from the activities? (multiple choices allowed)

	n	%
Changes in consumption patterns and living conditions	78	39,0
Activities intended to promote health and the quality of life	48	24,0
Sustainable settlements	50	25,0
Protecting the atmosphere and reducing air pollution	47	23,5
Strengthening renewable energy resources and reducing energy consumption	74	37,0
Afforestation and protection of forests	40	20,0
Sustainable agriculture	23	11,5
Protecting biological diversity	46	23,0
Protecting the seas	51	25,5
Protecting the quality of groundwater and drinking-water	96	48,0
Protecting lakes and watercourses	64	32,0
Reducing the use of hazardous chemicals and management of hazardous waste	69	34,5
Management of solid waste and wastewater	64	32,0
Environmentally sound business development and cooperation with businesses on cleaner technology	42	21,0
Ecotourism	21	10,5
Education and public consciousness-raising on local Agenda 21	75	37,5
Other	16	8,0
Total	904	-

This question is new and serves to supplement the process-oriented information (such as dissemination of information, organization and incentives) with substantial information covering the content and character of the activities and projects that are initiated as part of local Agenda 21. The special focus here is whether the spectrum of activities has the breadth required by Agenda 21 or is instead concentrated on traditional technically oriented approaches to the environment.

The first two or three categories cover activities that contribute to breadth, as they, at least in part, are outside the traditional activities of the technical services in the municipalities and counties. Examples include urban regeneration projects with an environmental focus, car-free projects, green families or other participatory projects with environmental aims. It is therefore positive that relatively many municipalities and counties report such activities.

The special profile of local Agenda 21 will become more clear if such projects become more widespread in the future.

16. Which of the following methods or instruments has the county or municipality used as part of its local Agenda 21 activities? (multiple choices allowed)

	n	%
Energy management	98	49,0
Environmental management	58	29,0
Environmental accounts or environmental reports for the county's or municipality's institutions	78	38,0
Environmental accounts for the county or municipality as a whole	25	12,5
Environmental assessment of county or municipal council decisions	14	7,0
Preparing environmental and sustainability indicators	11	5,5
Preparing sustainability checklists or the like for decision-making	7	3,5
Environmentally responsible purchasing	66	33,0
Organic food in institutions and canteens	59	29,5
An environmental manual for administrative staff	5	2,5
Other	19	9,5
Total	440	-

This question is partly new and serves to provide an overview of the methods and instruments used in local Agenda 21 work.

The responses show a clear dominance of methods and instruments that have been under development for many years but also can serve local Agenda 21 purposes. In contrast, the new instruments with a more holistic aim, such as environmental accounts for the municipality or county as a whole or preparing environmental or sustainability indicators, seem less prevalent than in 1996.

Greater dissemination of administrative instruments targeting the holistic aims of Agenda 21 would support achieving these aims. The weak trends on this point thus reveal the need for special efforts for the people leading the national campaign. Since the national campaign has made numerous efforts in recent years on this topic in the form of issuing brochures and reports, one way to make this effort more effective could be promoting several demonstration projects in the field.

17. Does the county or municipality have projects as part of local Agenda 21 that combine environmental issues with social, business, economic or cultural problems or that involve these sectors in the efforts to achieve sustainable development? (168 respondents)

	n		%	
Yes	54	(62)	32,1	(47,7)
No	114	(68)	67,9	(52,3)
Total	168	(130)	100,0	(100,0)

The question is unchanged in relation to the 1996 survey and attempts to determine the extent to which the municipalities and counties are working intersectorally, one of the five characteristics of a local Agenda 21.

The trend was negative, from 48% in 1996 to 32% in 1998. Nevertheless, the trend in question 13 indicates a more active role in 1998 for the social and health services, culture and education. This aspect should be monitored to determine how intersectoral Agenda 21 activities can be promoted.

18. Has the county or municipality set objectives or targets for local Agenda 21? (multiple choices allowed)

	n	%
Quantitative targets	37	18,5
Qualitative objectives or targets	80	40,0
Total	117	100,0

This question is new and aims to reveal the degree to which the municipalities and counties have operationalized the implementation of the local Agenda 21 into objectives or targets.

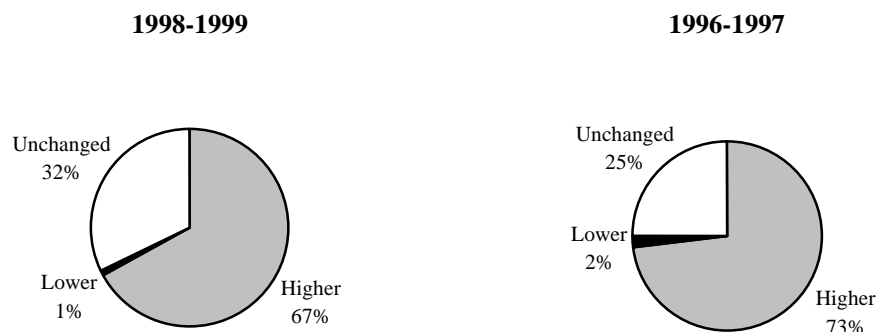
The responses show that 40% of the municipalities and counties that responded have only qualitative objectives or targets, and 41% did not respond, which probably means that they have no objectives or targets at all. This makes targeted Agenda 21 efforts and public information on the results achieved more difficult and thus indicates that indicators of sustainability need to be developed for local Agenda 21 purposes.

19. After the local Agenda 21 work was initiated, are there specific examples of political decisions in which considerations of sustainability and dialogue with the public have been given new and increased attention in relation to previously?

	n	%
Yes	72	43,6
No	93	56,4
Total	165	100,0

This question is new and aims to test the positive influence of the idea and form of work of Agenda 21 on how the municipalities and counties function in general. It is positive that one of the purposes of introducing local Agenda 21, strengthening the dialogue between the general public and politicians in municipal and regional planning, has been realized to a considerable extent.

20. What level of activity is expected in 1999 compared with that in 1998?



The same question was asked in 1996. The purpose of the question is to determine whether the municipalities and counties and the general public are beginning to get tired of local Agenda 21 and reduce activity.

The dominant assessment in both surveys was that the activity level related to Agenda 21 is expected to increase.

The expectation expressed in 1996 was realized, both in the content of the ongoing campaigns and the numerous municipalities and counties that became active on local Agenda 21 after 1996.

The expectation of increasing activity expressed again in 1998 shows that local Agenda 21 has become integrated into local government in Denmark and will continue to mobilize substantial creativity and energy among local groups and activists in the future. There is therefore every reason to maintain local Agenda 21 as a key framework for the continuing implementation of sustainable development.

21. Which one or two projects, activities or processes would you mention that could be considered your best practices in local Agenda 21?

A similar question formulated differently was asked in 1996. The responses in both surveys are so diverse and incomplete that they are not suitable to be presented here. The value of the information would be insufficient, even after editing.

The conclusion for future surveys is that the production of material on best practices must be organized as a separate project and cannot be an addendum to a questionnaire survey with another purpose and therefore designed specifically for this purpose.

The Ministry of Environment and Energy, Spatial Planning Department, opened a Web site in January 1999 on local Agenda 21 projects in Denmark at

<http://www.lokalAgenda21.dk>. The database contains more than 500 examples of projects (in Danish) produced by a specially designed project.

3.2. Best practices

In the 1996 survey, the counties and municipalities that are active in local Agenda 21 work were categorized into an advanced group, an intermediate group and a beginner group based on how many of the five characteristics of a local Agenda 21 applied to their work. The purpose of categorization was to determine how the groups differed in strategy and practice. There were clear differences: the advanced municipalities thus used a more adventurous strategy, involved more citizens' groups in dialogue, used more means to communicate objectives, targets and results and were more likely to agree that credible implementation of a local Agenda 21 requires resources early in the process.

A similar analysis was conducted based on the 1998 survey, but the criteria for the advanced group (27 municipalities and 3 counties) were different. This group comprises the municipalities and counties that responded that they have at least two thirds of the local Agenda 21 activities in questions 15 and 16 and also responded affirmatively to question 17 (intersectoral projects).

The reason the criteria were changed is that the 1998 questionnaire is not structured based on the five characteristics as the questionnaire was in 1996. In addition, the purpose in 1998 was not to publicize lists of municipalities and counties in various categories but to determine whether the strategy followed and the quality of the work are associated. This was demonstrated in the 1998 survey based on the following evidence.

- 62% of the advanced group of counties and municipalities had started their local Agenda 21 activities before 1996 versus 24% of the others. This does not merely show that the most advanced municipalities and counties started earlier but also that each local Agenda 21 campaign develops qualitatively and quantitatively over time. This last point is crucial and can be shown by the increase from 1996 to 1998 in the percentage of the active municipalities and counties that respond affirmatively to the questions. Rome was not built in one day; nor will local Agenda 21 be. The message from the survey to the municipalities and counties that are not yet active is that they should start now, as even a modest start counts and shows the way forward.
- 93% of the advanced group used the name local Agenda 21 versus 65% of the others.
- 68% of the advanced group had tried new forms of dialogue with the general public versus 18% of the others.
- 79% of the advanced group had started projects based on initiatives taken by the general public versus 48% of the others.

- 69% of the advanced group had local Agenda 21 projects extending beyond their boundaries versus 35% of the others.
- 88% of the advanced group generally gave sustainability great priority in the local political decision-making versus 36% of the others.
- Nevertheless, only 59% of the advanced group expected a higher level of activity in 1999 versus 72% of the others. This can be viewed as a positive impulse among many of the municipalities and counties that are still active at a low level of ambition to continue developing the local Agenda 21 work.

The advanced group is dominated by Denmark's largest cities. The use of the best practices is therefore realistically not merely a question of political interest and will but also available resources. Nevertheless, the association between strategy and quality is still important.

4. International implementation of local Agenda 21

Agenda 21 is a global framework for sustainable development. It is therefore useful to place the trends in Denmark in perspective by comparing them with local Agenda 21 work outside Denmark. This report discusses two topics:

- international efforts to delimit and establish minimum standards for a local Agenda 21, and
- the state of implementation of local Agenda 21, including dissemination and main problems, in selected countries.

4.1. Standards for a local Agenda 21

Agenda 21 does not define any precise requirements for a local Agenda 21, and the United Nations has not made the definition more precise in any authoritative way. This has generated a need for interpretation that has been filled by national governments, nongovernmental organizations, researchers and others worldwide with varying degrees of success.

This ambiguity has been called both fruitful and a hindrance. Both could be true. In any case, following the development of local Agenda 21 internationally and considering it in the ongoing implementation in Denmark would be useful.

Denmark launched a local Agenda 21 campaign in autumn 1994, and the national campaign proposed five characteristics of a local Agenda 21:

- a holistic perspective in intersectoral thinking and action,
- active public participation,
- a community thinking and acting in life cycles,
- a global perspective in local affairs, and
- a long-term perspective in local affairs.

The five characteristics expressed the views of the national campaign group on an accurate interpretation of Agenda 21 itself and were also the basis for implementation in Denmark.

At that time no other similar attempts had been made to summarize the ideas to be used in implementing a local Agenda 21 in such a brief and operational way.

Nevertheless, a survey conducted in 1996–1997 by the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives in cooperation with the United Nations Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (<http://www.iclei.org/la21/la21rep.htm>) shed new light on this issue. The survey established the following definition of local Agenda 21:

“Local Agenda 21 is a participatory, multi-sectoral process to achieve the goals of Agenda 21 at the local level through the preparation and implementation of a long-term, strategic action plan that addresses priority local sustainable development concerns”.

Based on this definition of a local Agenda 21, a number of responses were omitted from the final tabulation of local Agenda 21 activities. Among the reported activities that were not included in the tabulations are:

- activities stemming from the delegation of national or state-level Agenda 21 responsibilities to local governments,
- planning that was based on a one-time consultation process rather than an ongoing participatory process of local sustainable development decision making,
- processes that did not engage a diversity of local sectors,
- activities that did not apply the sustainable development concept, that is, an integrated approach to environmental, social and economic issues.

The survey asked people in many countries the following question.

What are the range of criteria you are using to define your local Agenda 21 or sustainable development planning process? Rank all suitable responses in order of importance.

The rank order of the respondents was as follows.

2. It must address economic, social and ecological needs together.
3. It must include a consensus on a vision for a sustainable future.
4. It must include a participatory process with local residents.
5. It must establish a Stakeholders Group, Forum or equivalent multi-sectoral community group to oversee the process.
6. It must prepare an Action Plan with concrete long-term targets.
7. It must prepare an Action Plan (without long-term targets).
8. It must establish a monitoring and reporting framework.
9. It must establish indicators to monitor progress.

Norway's Storting (parliament) provided another interpretation in launching local Agenda 21 in Norway (report to the Storting No. 58 (1996–1997) on environmental policy for a sustainable development: joint efforts for the future, English summary <http://odin.dep.no/md/eng/rs58.html>, Norwegian text, <http://odin.dep.no/repub/96-97/stmld/58>). This report emphasizes (translation):

“...that local Agenda 21 is an action-oriented strategy for vitalizing local democracy and municipal planning in the further development of the municipal community towards sustainable development”.

Local Agenda 21 brings new perspectives to the development of society:

- *The direction of development must be considered in a long-term perspective.*
- *The global effects of local measures must be emphasized more; this will influence such local policies as energy and land use.*
- *The will to conduct open dialogue and mobilize broadly must be developed further.*
- *Coherence and holism across sectors is essential.*
- *The quality of life and policies to promote welfare should be emphasized more.*

The report *From the Earth Summit to local Agenda 21* (William M. Lafferty & Katarina Eckerberg, editors, London, Earthscan Publications, 1998) contains a very thoughtful interpretation. This report was written by researchers from several countries and attempts to provide an international overview of the state of local Agenda 21. Similarly to the survey by the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, this report delimits local Agenda 21 by using the following criteria (emphasis in original):

1. *A more conscious attempt to relate environmental effects to underlying economic and political pressures (which in turn derive from political decisions, non-decisions and markets).*
2. *A more active efforts to relate local issues, decisions and dispositions to global impacts, both environmental and with respect to global solidarity and justice.*
3. *A more focused policy for achieving cross-sectoral integration of environment-and-development concerns, values and goals in planning, decision-making and policy implementation.*
4. *Greater efforts to increase community involvement, i.e. to bring both average citizens and major stakeholder groups, particularly business and labour unions, into the planning and implementation process with respect to environment-and-development issues.*
5. *A commitment to define and work with local problems within: (a) a broader ecological and regional framework, as well as (b) a greatly extended time frame (i.e., over three or more generations).*
6. *An specific identification with (reference to) the Rio summit and Agenda 21.*

Based on this, the report categorize the activities reported at three levels.

The first is policies and initiatives primarily aimed at nature restoration and environmental protection. These are initiatives that were or could have been taken before the Brundtland report (World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our common future*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1987) was published and that target environmental problems in a technical or scientific manner: traditional environmental protection activities.

The second level includes policies and initiatives that specifically refer to the idea of sustainability described in the Brundtland report or that use broad concepts such as “global ecology”. Many of these initiatives were taken after the Brundtland report was published in 1987 and before the Earth Summit in 1992.

The third level includes activities that explicitly refer to the message of the Earth Summit, including Agenda 21. The report, which aims to determine the effects of the Earth Summit, therefore delimits local Agenda 21 narrowly to include only this last category.

The report speculates about the difficulties associated with enforcing this narrow delimitation. The report especially emphasizes separating out traditional environmental protection but also believes that the sustainability concept of the Brundtland report differs from Agenda 21, the United Nations programme of action on sustainable development, as the explicit acknowledgement of the official United Nations programme contributes to the dissemination of the idea that industrialized and developing countries have a common responsibility for solving the problems of environment and development.

The following section presents further examples of attempts to more precisely define local Agenda 21. Nevertheless, the examples given previously already cover quite well the considerations of leading international experts on this point.

From Denmark’s perspective, the five characteristics of a local Agenda 21 Denmark formulated in 1994 seem to be in good accordance with the international definitions of the concept presented here. The last very narrow delimitation of local Agenda 21 as only including activities explicitly based on the Earth Summit serves a specific research purpose and does not justify any stricter definition in Denmark.

The strategy chosen from the beginning in Denmark was to let each municipality or county assess how their efforts accord with the standards of Agenda 21 but to also provide operational guidance in the form of recommended characteristics. This strategy has been appropriate, as it allows for creatively playing with ideas based on local conditions but avoids the situation in some countries in which all activity is considered to be local Agenda 21 action because a national consensus on the content of local Agenda 21 has not been created through operational guidance.

4.2. Implementation of local Agenda 21 in selected countries

How do Denmark’s efforts to disseminate the Agenda 21 ideas from the Earth Summit compare with those of other countries? Is Denmark advanced, a beginner or intermediate? Can Denmark learn from the strategies other countries have followed?

The following international overview attempts to answer these questions based on the report edited by Lafferty & Eckerberg and the 1996–1997 survey of the ICLEI.

It is very positive that local Agenda 21 is not only being taken up by a few highly industrialized countries with the resources to focus on problems that could be considered luxury problems in large portions of the world. The ICLEI survey showed that local authorities in 64 countries were engaged in local Agenda 21 on 30 November 1996. This section describes the state of implementation in several countries categorized as advanced, intermediate (including Denmark) and beginners.

Advanced countries (United Kingdom and Sweden)

The first two countries to start the local Agenda 21 process at the municipal level were the United Kingdom and Sweden. They started a few months after the Earth Summit. In 1994, 60% of the local government authorities in the United Kingdom were working on a local Agenda 21. In Sweden, 220 of the 286 municipalities (77%) were active in 1995 and all by 1996. The starting-points chosen differed, however. The initiative for local Agenda 21 came mostly from the bottom up in the United Kingdom. One reason may be that the local authorities took advantage of this opportunity to give higher priority to and manage environmental protection, since the United Kingdom did not have a strong tradition of environmental regulation.

In Sweden, the national authorities played an important role in informing municipalities about the Earth Summit and promoting local Agenda 21 work in the beginning. The municipalities also play an important role in environmental policy, and Sweden is also considered to be a leading country in environmental policies.

In both countries the national associations of local authorities and the national governments announced their support and promotion of local Agenda 21 work immediately after the Earth Summit.

Sweden. The local Agenda 21 work in Sweden began right after the Earth Summit. Agenda 21 was translated into Swedish, and several regional conferences were initiated. The Minister for the Environment and the Chair of the National Association of Municipalities wrote a joint letter that emphasized the significance of the municipalities taking up the challenge presented by the Earth Summit.

All municipalities have initiated the local Agenda 21 process. A survey conducted by Umeå University in 1998 shows that 56% of the municipalities have adopted local Agenda 21 action plans.

King Carl Gustaf's Environmental Prize was established after the Earth Summit. It is awarded each year to municipalities that are working with Agenda 21, based on their own prerequisites.

In 1993, the Government of Sweden submitted a resolution on the Earth Summit (*Med sikte på hållbar utveckling; Genomförande av besluten vid FN:s konferens om miljö och utveckling – UNCED (1993/94:111)*) to the Riksdag (parliament), which adopted it with a broad majority:

The Government considers that the municipalities should follow the recommendations of Agenda 21. ... The local Agenda action plans shall therefore comprise the foundation upon which our national strategy shall rest.

Although this resolution is not legally binding for the municipalities, its recommendations are stronger than the guidelines issued later by the national authorities in Denmark. One year later, the Government of Sweden wrote to the municipalities (1994/95:120):

It is important that the local Agenda 21 work already initiated be sustained and that the experience be disseminated. ... The aim is that the work should result in an action plan with objectives that state the direction of development for the municipality.

In 1994, Sweden's Ministry of Environment published a local Agenda 21 guide (Tommy Månsson, *Lokal agenda 21: en vägledning*, Stockholm, Fritzes, 1994) that indicated potential strategies for sustainability in a local context. In 1995, the Government appointed a National Agenda 21 Committee with members of the Riksdag and other politicians, nongovernmental organizations and scientists. This Committee has initiated regional interdisciplinary round-table seminars. The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency serves as a source of knowledge and provides information to the municipalities on both Agenda 21 and generally on environmental objectives, targets and strategies.

The National Agenda 21 Committee was superseded in 1998 by a National Forum for Ecologically Sustainable Development and a National Agenda 21 Coordinator cooperating with the National Forum who is on the staff of the Ministry for the Environment. The reason for the new structure was the need for a new strategy. The reporting and preparatory phase is now considered to be completed; the next phase is practical implementation and dissemination of experience. The National Forum for Ecologically Sustainable Development established a database with practical examples called Guldkorn (<http://guldkorn.tjugofyra.net/guldkorn/se>). Based on cooperation with Denmark's Ministry of Environment and Energy, this database now includes Denmark's examples (<http://guldkorn.tjugofyra.net/guldkorn/dk>).

In spring 1995, the Riksdag decided to allocate SEK 100 million to businesses and municipalities for investment in promoting restructuring in an environmentally sound direction, including a substantial portion for local Agenda 21 activities.

In early 1996, all 288 municipalities reported that they had initiated local Agenda 21 activities. About half had employed a local Agenda 21 coordinator.

In 1997, the Riksdag allocated SEK 15 billion to a programme of sustainable development over 4–5 years. Of this, about SEK 7 billion is earmarked for local projects initiated by municipalities in cooperation with other local non-governmental organizations. The Government has emphasized that local Agenda 21 is a good starting-point for these investment projects.

The survey conducted by Umeå University in 1998 determined the types of projects that have been initiated: waste, consumption, water, energy, household management, nature conservation, transport, societal planning and chemicals. Seventy-six percent of the municipalities have a special fund for local Agenda 21 projects, with allocations averaging SEK 360,000 per municipality per year.

The survey also showed that many municipalities have constant or increasing interest for local Agenda 21, but enthusiasm seems to be dwindling for 30%. The content of the local Agenda 21 work is becoming broader and broader. In addition to issues related to the external environment, many efforts related to children and schools have been made in recent years. An increasing number of municipalities also focus on the social dimension of Agenda 21. In contrast, in the areas of social care, culture and leisure, local Agenda 21 does not seem to have had any effect. According to the municipalities, the greatest barriers to sustainable development at the local level are the organization of Agenda 21 activities, lack of time and resources in terms of money and staff but also lack of support from the national authorities.

An area with high priority in connection with local Agenda 21 in Sweden is efforts to educate children in environmental awareness. A total of 125 municipalities have instruction in schools on Agenda 21 and sustainable development. Many municipalities are attempting to integrate environmental objectives and targets and labour market policy. Many of the local Agenda 21 action plans focus on the need to change people's lifestyles and to re-engineer production and consumption.

The counties prepare regional Agenda 21 material in the form of practical material on the state of the environment to inspire the local Agenda 21 work of the municipalities. In contrast to Denmark, however, the counties have not been very active in preparing local Agenda 21 action plans themselves.

United Kingdom. The ICLEI survey from 1996–1997 showed that 90% of the local authorities in the United Kingdom had pledged to begin to implement a local Agenda 21 action plan. Of these, 70% had already initiated local Agenda 21 activities. In addition, 70 local authorities had signed the Local Government Declaration on Sustainability and 54 the Charter of European Cities and Towns towards Sustainability (Aalborg Charter), which both mention the duty to initiate a local Agenda 21.

Local Agenda 21 in the United Kingdom has featured:

- strong efforts to involve multiple sectors in following up and implementing action plans;
- increased use of indicators, objectives and targets;
- support for environmental projects not only in traditional environmental protection but also in the entire realm of sustainability, including household management, work and democracy;
- increased efforts to ensure that national planning is carried out in accordance with criteria related to sustainability;
- a much lower national government profile than in Sweden; the Local Government Management Board has been the driving force and has served as a reference and resource for local and national authorities in many countries.

The main priority areas for the local authorities have been: green housekeeping (internally oriented environmental management), environmental accounting, developing intersectoral policies for sustainability, environmental education and developing new tools and techniques for assessment, such as the use of indicators. The aspects of democracy and dialogue have been key in the activities and the structures of the following types: bottom-up, empowerment, city assessments, combating poverty, Planning for Real exercises, local group work, environmental fora, round-table discussions and juries. In 1996, about 50 local authorities had used such new forms of dialogue and planning structures.

In 1997, Prime Minister Tony Blair sent a letter to all the local authorities to ask them to start implementing a local Agenda 21 by the year 2000. The Government thus moved explicitly into this arena for the first time. In addition, an intersectoral steering group was created to support the local authorities. The steering group has established a database that serves as a network for the local authorities.

Intermediate countries (Denmark, Norway, Finland, and the Netherlands)

Denmark. A speech by Denmark's Minister for Environment and Energy at the European Conference on Sustainable Cities & Towns in May 1994 in Aalborg, Denmark launched Denmark's local Agenda 21 campaign. In October 1994, the Minister, the National Association of Local Authorities in Denmark and the Association of County Councils in Denmark sent a joint letter to all counties and municipalities in Denmark to remind them of the target agreed to in Agenda 21 at the Earth Summit:

By 1996, most local authorities in each country should have undertaken a consultative process with their population and achieved a consensus on "a local Agenda 21" for the community.

Based on this, the municipalities and counties were encouraged to start their local Agenda 21 work. The Minister pointed out that this was not a new type of plan but a process intended to improve existing planning.

In spring 1995, guidelines on local Agenda 21 were published (*Agenda 21: an introduction prepared for the counties and municipalities in Denmark*, Copenhagen, Ministry of Environment and Energy, 1995). Local Agenda 21 had not been clearly defined, and five characteristics of a local Agenda 21 were therefore prepared as part of the guidelines. In principle, the national authorities have maintained that each county or municipality should establish the specific content of a local Agenda 21 based on the local conditions.

In 1997, Denmark's Folketing (parliament) passed a resolution urging that the local Agenda 21 process in Denmark be strengthened by:

- having national Agenda 21 days,
- requiring by law the municipalities and counties to produce local Agenda 21 reports,
- developing strategic environmental planning through such measures as improving the environmental assessment of proposed legislation and the Finance Bill, and
- submitting proposals on how subsidies, taxes and quotas can be continually assessed for their influence on sustainable development.

The government decided to comply with this resolution through such measures as proposing that a local Agenda 21 report should be required pursuant to the Planning Act, which is considerably stricter than the previously gentle recommendations. The Committee on Municipal Planning established by the Minister for Environment and Energy recommended how the counties and municipalities should report on their local Agenda 21 activities. A law passed in February 2000 requires the counties and municipalities to publish reports on their local Agenda 21 work every 4 years, and the first one before the end of 2003.

The Green Fund, which is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Environment and Energy, provides both direct and indirect financial support for local Agenda 21 projects. The Green Fund allocates DKK 50 million per year; one third of this is spent on green guides and covers salaries for the first 3 years. Locally initiated projects that include aspects of the five characteristics of a local Agenda 21 are granted support totalling DKK 10 million per year.

In addition to the Ministry of Environment and Energy, the Ministry of Urban Affairs and Housing is especially active in local Agenda 21 work. The Ministry prepared a plan on action and perspectives related to urban policy (*The City of the Future*) in 1999. This plan mentions local Agenda 21 as an important basis for a more holistically oriented urban policy in the future. In 1999, the Folketing allocated DKK 96 million to development projects related to urban development in the coming years.

In addition, local Agenda 21 has been emphasized as a area worthy of high priority in the comments to Act No. 434 of 10 June 1997 on a fund for environmentally related employment. This fund supports small municipalities in establishing locally based, permanent jobs in this area.

The cooperation between the national government and voluntary associations on local Agenda 21 has been strengthened in recent years. A visible sign of this is a brochure issued in 1998 on “A common effort – local Agenda 21”, which resulted from cooperation between the National Association of Local Authorities in Denmark, the Confederation of Danish Industries, Danish Commerce and Services, the Danish Family Farmers Association, the Danish Farmers’ Unions, the Danish Society for the Conservation of Nature, the Danish Outdoor Council and the Ministry of Environment and Energy.

In late 1998, 200 of Denmark’s 289 counties and municipalities (69%) had begun working on a local Agenda 21, and activity is expected to increase in the future.

A similar survey in late 1996 found that 145 of the 289 (50%) had begun local Agenda 21 activity, which fulfilled the target set at the Earth Summit that, by 1996, most local authorities in each country should have undertaken a consultative process with their population and achieved a consensus on a local Agenda 21 for the community.

Most of the active counties and municipalities began before 1997; long-term experience has thus begun to be gained, and projects are being completed.

The Ministry of Environment and Energy, Spatial Planning Department, is responsible for the national campaign. The Ministry has initiated diverse activities to promote local Agenda 21: newsletters, brochures, lectures, demonstration projects, questionnaire surveys such as the one described here, conferences, cooperation with relevant national authorities and voluntary organizations and international contacts, including cooperating with Sweden’s national campaign organization, which has led to a database of examples called *Guld Korn* (<http://guld Korn.tjugofyra.net/guld Korn/dk>).

The Ministry is leading Denmark’s campaign in cooperation with the National Association of Local Authorities in Denmark and the Association of County Councils in Denmark. The active counties and municipalities have designated contact people who comprise a nationwide local Agenda 21 network.

Norway. Immediately after the Brundtland report was published in 1987, Norway launched a pilot programme reforming environmental protection in the municipalities. This programme has been widely disseminated in the municipalities and has become a strong national reference for sustainable development. All the important actors in municipal environmental policies currently agree that the environmental reform should be consolidated and that this should be done as the basis for stronger efforts in local Agenda 21. In

practice, the programme will probably be gradually adapted to the ideas of local Agenda 21 that strongly emphasize the process of change and dialogue and probably also a gradual transition to the Agenda 21 name.

In spring 1998, the Ministry of the Environment, Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities, Norwegian Forum for Local Environmental Protection and Norwegian Forum for Municipal and County Planners held a conference in Frederikstad on local Agenda 21. The purpose was to motivate the counties and municipalities to start working on local Agenda 21. The conference concluded with a Frederikstad Declaration. As of spring 2000, all of Norway's 19 counties and nearly 200 of 435 municipalities had signed the Declaration and thereby pledged to begin local Agenda 21 work.

One important reason why local Agenda 21 has an increasingly strong profile is the government's clear signals supporting local Agenda 21 starting in 1998. Thus, the Prime Minister urged all other government ministers to support local Agenda 21 work. The Ministry of the Environment is responsible for coordinating local Agenda 21 work across the ministries.

Further, the Ministry of the Environment has published a strategy for local Agenda 21 (in Norwegian, <http://www.odin.dep.no/md/la21/strategi.html>) and disseminated it throughout the Ministry, to all counties and municipalities and to other external contacts.

The strategy sets four criteria for evaluating local Agenda 21:

- democracy and participation through a new dialogue,
- a sustainable economy and business structure,
- intersectoral management; and
- follow-up and global considerations.

The purpose of the criteria is to tell the local authorities what the national authorities expect, allow the Ministry of the Environment to report to the Storting (parliament), strengthen the work of other ministries and to help meet the needs of the municipalities and other Agenda 21 coordinators in assessing their own work with sustainable development compared with the experience of others. This proposal is well thought out and broad-minded and could serve to inspire Denmark, as Denmark does not yet have such a written strategy and the departments and agencies of the Ministry of Environment and Energy outside the Spatial Planning Department do not have any mandatory operational duties in promoting local Agenda 21.

The local Agenda 21 unit within the Ministry of the Environment coordinates the state's efforts in this area and strongly emphasizes cooperating with the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities. In addition, the Ministry works with the Ideas Bank (Stiftelsen Idébanken) on such activities as preparing campaign material. The Ideas Bank was one of the initiators of Agenda 21 work in Norway. The Ministry's local Agenda 21 unit had three employees and a budget of NOK 18.4 million in 1999. The budget includes

grants to voluntary organizations and local Agenda 21 coordinators. These coordinators work in the regional offices of the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities in some of the counties, supporting and initiating local work, establishing networks and promoting the exchange of experience between the municipalities in that county.

Finland. Local Agenda 21 has followed up Finland's municipal project for sustainable development. Finland has a national Agenda 21 commission chaired by the prime minister. The tasks of the commission are very similar to those of Denmark's campaign. Nevertheless, Finland's campaign seems to be more centralized than Denmark's, which probably reflects the different structure of local government in Finland.

In 1997, 193 of the 452 municipalities were preparing or active in local Agenda 21 work. As in Denmark, the largest cities are leading the charge. This means that 70% of the population is covered by the local Agenda 21 work. In early 1997, the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities introduced a local Agenda 21 programme. The Association organizes regional training events, information and telephone consultation.

Local Agenda 21 has been organized in the divisions of environmental services in most municipalities. Very few municipalities have allocated money specifically to local Agenda 21 work, but the current environmental work has been given a new dimension. In some areas, new forms of cooperation have been introduced at the local level between administrative sectors, the local authorities, organizations and citizens' groups. The knowledge of local Agenda 21 work continues to be generally poor, however. The concept is generally seen as being very abstract, just as the municipalities have a weak tradition of intersectoral cooperation and participatory planning.

The Netherlands. The Netherlands has about 600 municipalities, and they receive 90% of their revenue from the state budget. The municipalities are therefore not as strong and autonomous as Denmark's municipalities have been since local government was reformed in 1970.

Immediately after the Earth Summit, the municipalities were not emphasized as the main actors in following up the results of the conference. It was generally believed that they did not have the resources to take on this task and that they already largely followed the ideas of Agenda 21. The Netherlands was considered – and considered itself – to be a model country in both environmental policy and in participatory planning processes. Very few municipalities therefore took up the challenge of the Earth Summit in the first few years.

A national steering committee for local Agenda 21 was created in 1994, and a municipal environmental action programme was launched for 1995–1998 with the opportunity for state subsidies, including for local Agenda 21. This got the municipalities going. The programme was allocated EUR 47 million per year, and local Agenda 21 programmes that fulfilled the following conditions were eligible.

- A local Agenda 21 should supplement the municipality's previous activities.
- The local Agenda 21 should include a dialogue between the municipality and the local inhabitants on how sustainable development can be promoted.
- Environmental education should be a key implementation activity.
- A local Agenda 21 should aim towards implementing concrete projects and activities.

In mid-1995, 143 of the 600 municipalities were working on a local Agenda 21 or had pledged to do so. The steering committee has continued its work based on the target of disseminating local Agenda 21 to nearly all municipalities by 2001.

Surveys of trends in the Netherlands demonstrate results that can be of interest to other countries. A survey investigated whether the municipalities that were advanced in local Agenda 21 work were dominated by a particular type of political party, based on the expectation that socialist-led municipalities would be most prevalent. This was not the case, and the municipalities that were active early had no particular pattern of political leadership.

Another survey determined whether the advanced municipalities were those that were already most progressive on environmental issues. They were not. Denmark can also provide examples of very environmentally progressive municipalities that had already used substantial resources before the Earth Summit to disseminate the idea of sustainability using other names and that were reluctant to market what they considered to be the same content under a new and strange heading after 1992. Nevertheless, they have since converted their environmental enthusiasm to local Agenda 21 because they consider the Agenda 21 concept to be solid.

Beginner countries (Austria, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy and Poland)

Austria. Austria has 2352 municipalities. As of January 2000, 209 of the municipalities were members of the Klimabündnis (Climate Alliance), which is similar to local Agenda 21. The Klimabündnis is part of the Climate Alliance of European Cities with Indigenous Rainforest Peoples, which has 857 full member cities. The Klimabündnis will probably be converted to local Agenda 21, and an estimated 15–20 municipalities become members each year.

Four cities in Austria have signed the Charter of European Cities & Towns towards Sustainability (Aalborg Charter). The national authorities do not provide financial support, and municipalities are not required to start local Agenda 21 work. The national role is thus still very limited and in the preparatory phases. The local authorities do not generally have any information about their potential role in local Agenda 21. Nongovernmental organizations are the most active forces in this work.

Germany. In 1996, 200 of the 16,000 communes in Germany and about 20 of the 329 districts had begun to implement local Agenda 21. These local Agenda 21 initiatives were mostly experimental and varied substantially in structure and content. The federal government provides very little support to local Agenda 21, and the communes were very critical of this.

There are thus few active communes and many different viewpoints on local Agenda 21. The local Agenda 21 initiatives are only systematized in part, and the federal government provides very little information and support.

The few positive experiences with local Agenda 21 so far and the expectation of positive trends in the future are based on the following newly established coalitions at various levels.

- The activists in the individual communes have formed a network to get local Agenda 21 on the local political agenda.
- Active politicians and civil servants have created a network to promote the interest of local authorities in local Agenda 21 and to lead around integration between various political viewpoints.
- Coalitions have been established between groups of local actors to generate further acceptance and to establish structures that allow public participation.
- Communes that develop local Agenda 21 have formed coalitions: to exchange experience through membership in a comprehensive network; to support more effective lobbying and public relations; and to create incentives through internal, friendly competition.

Iceland. Agenda 21 is the basis for Iceland's national environmental programme. Preparations are starting slowly to implement local Agenda 21, but the municipalities have not yet received any programme.

Ireland. Local Agenda 21 activity is minimal in Ireland, which has 118 local authorities and 29 counties. Two local authorities have signed the Charter of European Cities & Towns towards Sustainability (Aalborg Charter) as part of their membership in the European Sustainable Cities & Towns Campaign. The national environmental strategy mentions local Agenda 21, but this is clearly the initial phase. The Environmental Protection Agency manages environmental policy centrally. Southern Ireland has a local Agenda 21 forum with participants from the relevant groups of actors. This model was created by the environmental organization An Taisce (the National Trust of Ireland).

Italy. Italy has 8201 municipalities and 20 regions. About 30% of these authorities are working on local Agenda 21. The largest cities primarily focus on urban transport and noise, and some have activities related to energy. The national authorities support some local Agenda 21 activities. The concept of local Agenda 21 is somewhat difficult to market in Italy, however, and not all projects that qualify to be local Agenda 21 projects use the name.

Poland. Poland has very severe environmental problems, and local government is not yet fully developed after the end of Communist rule. Nevertheless, a foundation called the Foundation for the Support of Local Democracy was created. One of its aims is to work to disseminate local Agenda 21. Sweden is supporting this process.

Countries outside Europe

Japan and Australia seem to be most advanced industrialized countries in local Agenda 21 outside Europe.

Japan adopted a national action plan for Agenda 21 in 1993. One aim is to support the local authorities. In connection with this, an expert panel was established to advise local authorities in local Agenda 21 work.

In Australia, the Municipal Conservation Association of Australia leads the work in this area. The aim is that all local authorities adopt a local Agenda 21.

In the **United States and Canada**, the local authorities themselves mostly initiate the process. Seattle, Washington has established itself as the global reference point for the formulation of indicators of sustainability suitable for local Agenda 21, such as “wild salmon run through local streams” and “the percentage of infants born with low birthweight”. These indicators should be easily understandable to laypeople, focus on benefits and not on processes and cover environmental, social and economic factors. Canada has established a special form of dialogue suitable to local Agenda 21, Canadian Roundtables, which are described in guidelines, including those from the Local Government Management Board in the United Kingdom.

Knowledge of the Agenda 21 situation in developing countries and newly industrialized countries is more limited, but some of these countries have participated in international conferences on Agenda 21. **Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador and Peru** seem to have started work.

India and China, which comprise nearly 40% of the world’s population, have both adopted a national framework for local Agenda 21 work.

The process has also begun in **South Africa**.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

The generally positive conclusions of the survey of Denmark are mostly associated with the indisputable progress and development since the 1996 survey: a relative basis for assessment. The positive conclusions are not based on absolute standards of quality, which the national campaign group did not want to establish based on the flexibility built into Agenda 21.

Some observers have claimed that few of the municipalities and counties in Denmark registered as being active in local Agenda 21 are actually very active.

Thus, despite clear progress, there is always room for improvement!

5.1. Main conclusions

- Similar to the 1996 survey, the 1998 survey achieved a response rate of 100% for the survey's key question: has a local Agenda 21 been initiated or not? The result is clear progress: 200 of 289 municipalities and counties were active in 1998 versus 145 in 1996. The percentage rose from 50% to 69%, and the percentage of the population covered increased from 71% to 84%. The campaign target set for 1998 that two thirds of the municipalities and counties should be active was thus well fulfilled. The municipalities that are not yet active are mainly in sparsely populated rural areas.
- In addition to the quantitative growth of the number of active municipalities and counties, the quality of the work in the already active ones improved from 1996 to 1998. Thus, 54% of the active municipalities and counties had initiated concrete projects in 1998 versus 35% in 1996. The time period between activity starting and a concrete project being initiated is often 1–2 years, which is why many of the newly active municipalities and counties do not yet have any concrete projects. Another example is that 31% of the active municipalities and counties financed citizens' initiatives in 1998 versus 19% in 1996. This pattern is similar for other questions that can be compared directly from 1996 to 1998.
- Most of the active municipalities and counties expected increasing activity in 1999. There is thus no sign that Agenda 21 is passé and that new concepts should arise to replace it. On the contrary: the Agenda 21 idea continues to be vital and will be a key reference for promoting sustainable development in the future.
- Similar to the 1996 survey, the 1998 survey found that the quality and content of the local Agenda 21 was associated with the strategy chosen. The 27 most advanced municipalities and three most advanced counties score substantially higher than others on organization, dialogue, process, information, incentives and other factors. The survey therefore provides a good basis for revealing and disseminating best practices in local Agenda 21 work.

- The international analysis showed that the attempts to more precisely define local Agenda 21 resulted in definitions that are well in accordance with the five characteristics established in Denmark in 1994. These are therefore well chosen, especially to the extent they actually serve as a reference for nearly all active municipalities and counties in Denmark.
- The international comparison also shows that Sweden and the United Kingdom are advanced countries in the local Agenda 21 work. The intermediate group in Europe includes Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands and Norway, and such countries as Austria, Germany and Ireland started relatively late given their otherwise progressive policies on the environment.
- Outside Europe, the countries most advanced in local Agenda 21 work seem to be Japan and Australia and, secondarily, the United States and Canada. The most positive news is perhaps the fact that many developing and newly industrialized countries have started to work on local Agenda 21, including China and India, which cover nearly 40% of the world's population. Local Agenda 21 is thus a global movement, which is important to emphasize for sceptics who feel that their own potential contribution is insignificant in the global context.
- In most countries active in local Agenda 21, the nongovernmental organizations have had a role both in initiating and in determining the content of local Agenda 21. In the United Kingdom, the World Wide Fund for Nature and the Friends of the Earth have been very active. In Sweden the Swedish Society for the Conservation of Nature has had a great role. In Denmark the Danish Society for the Conservation of Nature, the Danish Outdoor Council and others have been active. Nongovernmental organizations have probably been even more prominent in developing countries than in industrialized countries regarding local Agenda 21 and other fields of development.
- The international dissemination of local Agenda 21 that has already been achieved makes it almost certain that local Agenda 21 will serve as the global banner for sustainable development. Denmark should therefore also maintain this concept in the future.

5.2. Main recommendation

Based on the general conclusions that all indicate continuing gains for local Agenda 21, we recommend that the present campaign strategy in Denmark be continued, based on voluntary efforts, dissemination of information and experience and targeted coalitions and networks, with the aim of achieving the additional growth in the number of active municipalities and counties and the improvement in quality that seem to be possible in the next few years.

Nevertheless, making the main strategy more clear could be an option based on inspiration from Norway's Ministry of the Environment, which has prepared and published a strategy on how the whole Ministry in cooperation with specific national and regional actors will work towards disseminating local

Agenda 21. Denmark does not have such an explicit written strategy (which is not to be confused with guidelines for municipalities and counties and local initiators). The national campaign group, led by the Ministry of Environment and Energy, Spatial Planning Department, has moved forward step by step and gradually developed a position of strength in practice for local Agenda 21 as the common concept for sustainable development. Since even Denmark's Folketing has endorsed local Agenda 21 and enacted legislation requiring the counties and municipalities to prepare reports on the local Agenda 21 activities, it seems appropriate to consolidate the position achieved by developing a written strategy for the continuing work.

A realistic target before the reports are prepared to the United Nations for the comprehensive review of Agenda 21 implementation in 2002 is to get half of the 89 municipalities that are not yet active to become active.

Within the framework of the present main strategy, we recommend working on the following special problems and challenges.

5.3. Specific conclusions and recommendations

- Some municipalities and counties do not use the name local Agenda 21 explicitly, which weakens their campaign. The name should be used more widely in the future.
- Even though the general public has mobilized more since 1996, the absolute numbers are still modest. Important groups of actors, such as children and young adults, are recorded as not participating in local Agenda 21 work in most municipalities and counties. The people responsible for the local campaigns should continue to give priority to strengthening public participation further, including promoting additional growth in the extent of projects initiated by the general public.

Business is hardly involved in local Agenda 21 work. The report discusses the extent to which this should be considered a problem given the special orientation of Agenda 21 towards lifestyles and the individual citizen. Nevertheless, the participatory aspects of companies' environmental management should be strengthened as a meaningful starting-point from an Agenda 21 viewpoint to involve companies more closely in the local Agenda 21 work.

Annex 1. Questionnaire sent to Denmark's counties and municipalities on 9 November 1998

Ministry of Environment and Energy
Association of County Councils in Denmark
National Association of Local Authorities in Denmark

November 1998

Survey on local Agenda 21

Municipality County Name

Contact person

DepartmentTel

Please send the completed questionnaire by **1 December 1998** to:

Ministry of Environment and Energy
Spatial Planning Department
Højbro Plads 4
DK-1200 Copenhagen K
Attention: Vibeke Jørgensen

If you have questions about the questionnaire, please contact J.U. Moos, Danish Institute of Technology, tel. +45 43 50 70 42, e-mail Jorn-Ulrick.Moos@dti.dk.

Questions

1. Has the county/municipality begun working on a local Agenda 21 ?

Comments: Denmark's national authorities have not clearly defined what is required of a local Agenda 21. The previously issued guide on Agenda 21, however, presented five characteristics of local Agenda 21 activities: a holistic perspective in intersectoral thinking and action; active participation by the residents and users; a community thinking and acting in life cycles; a global perspective in local affairs; and a long-term perspective in local affairs. The county or municipality should thus use these characteristics to determine whether they have begun working on a local Agenda 21. Har amtet/kommunen indledt arbejdet med Lokal Agenda 21?

Yes

No

2. If yes, when?

Before 1996

1996

1997

1998

3. If no, why? Check all that apply. Do not fill in the questionnaire after question 3 if you answered no to question 1.

- a. Lack of political or administrative interest
- b. Lack of resources
- c. Lack of information
- d. Lack of time
- e. Other (indicate).....

4. Does the county's or municipality's internal and external information explicitly mention "local Agenda 21" or "Agenda 21"?

yes

No

5. What is the current status of the implementation of the local Agenda 21?

- a. Being prepared internally
- b. Dialogue with general public begun
- c. Projects initiated
- d. First projects completed

6. How is the local Agenda 21 documented? *Check all that apply.*

- a. Local Agenda 21 is merely considered as a special starting-point for the work and is not documented in written form
- b. Local Agenda 21 is expressed in a separate planning document
- c. Local Agenda 21 is integrated in the regional plan or municipal plan
- d. Local Agenda 21 is integrated in the environmental action plan
- e. Other (indicate).....

7. What has the county or municipality done to generate and sustain local attention on and interest for local Agenda 21? *Check all that apply.*

- a. A public meeting open to the entire county or municipality
- b. A public meeting for specific local areas of the county or municipality
- c. A meeting with specially invited nongovernmental organizations and individuals
- d. A meeting with a specially designated environmental forum, dialogue forum or the like
- e. Information via local print media
- f. Information via local TV or radio
- g. Information via the Internet
- h. Household distribution of brochures, letters, questionnaires or the like
- i. Information via a special environmental centre
- j. Education (school, study circles, popular education, etc.)
- k. Active outreach
- l. An environmental fair, exhibitions, Environment Week or the like
- m. Financial support for public initiatives
- n. Untraditional initiatives that gain attention
-

8. Has the county or municipality used other forms of dialogue as part of Agenda 21 than those previously used to promote public participation? *Forms of dialogue means such activities as public meetings, future workshops, neighbourhood meetings and study circles.*

Yes

No

9. To what extent do nongovernmental organizations and individuals outside the county or municipality's own organization participate in the local Agenda 21 work? *Check all that apply.*

	Do not participate	Participate somewhat	Participate very actively
a. Children under 15 years			
b. People 15–25 years old			
c. Individual activists			
d. Immigrants or ethnic minorities			
e. Unemployed people			
f. Handicapped people			
g. Environmental groups			
h. Topic-oriented citizens' groups			
i. Local councils, village associations or the like			
j. Nonprofit housing associations and tenants' associations			
k. Homeowners' associations			
l. Industry, commerce and service			
m. Agriculture and forestry			
n. Trade unions			
o. Sports clubs			
p. Research, education and popular education			
q. Other			

Are there activities within the local Agenda 21 framework of the county or municipality that were started based on public initiative?

Yes

No

11. Does the local Agenda 21 work include cooperative projects with neighbouring counties or municipalities on problems that transcend the boundaries of the county or municipality?

Yes

No

12. How is local Agenda 21 organized? *Check all that apply.*

- a. Is there a citizens' forum or the like that serves as an established dialogue partner for the county or municipality?
- b. Has the municipal or county council established a council committee to promote and follow up on the local Agenda 21?
- c. Does the county or municipality have a green guide or a nature guide on the local Agenda 21 staff?
- d. Has the county or municipal administration designated a local Agenda 21 staff member or coordinator?
- e. Does the administration have a standing working group for the local Agenda 21?
- f. Are there working groups for the local Agenda 21 that include councillors, citizens and staff?

13. To what extent are the individual administrative sectors involved? *Check all that apply.*

	Leading role	Participates actively	Participates some	Does not participate
Central administration				
Technical services				
Social and health services				
Culture				
Education				

14. Have funds been allocated to the following activities? *Check all that apply.*

- a. Information and campaigns for the general public on local Agenda 21
- b. Information and campaigns for companies on local Agenda 21
- c. Local Agenda 21 activities initiated by citizens' groups
- d. Education and orientation of administrative staff

15. Has the county or municipality initiated or been involved in projects or activities under the local Agenda 21 banner that have the following purposes or in which the following result from the activities? *Check all that apply.*

- a. Changes in consumption patterns and living conditions (such as Green Families, organic markets, environmental fairs, second-hand shops and environmental manuals)
- b. Activities intended to promote health and the quality of life
- c. Sustainable settlements (such as urban ecology, environmentally sound construction, ecologically sound urban renewal and urban regeneration and sustainable villages)
- d. Protecting the atmosphere and reducing air pollution (for example, reducing CO₂ emissions, measure to reduce and calm road traffic and parking restrictions)
- e. Strengthening renewable energy resources and reducing energy consumption
- f. Afforestation and protection of forests
- g. Sustainable agriculture
- h. Protecting biological diversity (such as green wedges to improve animal and plant habitats and re-establishing small biotopes)
- i. Protecting the seas (for example, the European Blue Flag Campaign)
- j. Protecting the quality of groundwater and drinking-water (for example, preparing a plan for reducing pesticide use or reducing the use of pesticide in private gardens, public land, industry and agriculture)
- k. Protecting lakes and watercourses (for example, by purification)
- l. Reducing the use of hazardous chemicals and management of hazardous waste
- m. Management of solid waste and wastewater (such as composting and biological wastewater treatment)
- n. Environmentally sound business development and cooperation with businesses on cleaner technology (such as preparing environmental manuals)
- o. Ecotourism
- p. Education and public consciousness-raising on local Agenda 21 (such as instruction in schools, in-service training of staff and disseminating information to the general public and to businesses)
- q. Other (indicate)

.....

16. Which of the following methods or instruments has the county or municipality used as part of its local Agenda 21 activities? *Check all that apply.*

- a. Energy management
- b. Environmental management
- c. Environmental accounts or environmental reports for the county's or municipality's institutions
- d. Environmental accounts for the county or municipality as a whole
- e. Environmental assessment of county or municipal council decisions
- f. Preparing environmental and sustainability indicators
- g. Preparing sustainability checklists or the like for decision-making
- h. Environmentally responsible purchasing
- i. Organic food in institutions and canteens
- j. An environmental manual for administrative staff
- k. Other (indicate)
-

17. Does the county or municipality have projects as part of local Agenda 21 that combine environmental issues with social, business, economic or cultural problems or that involve these sectors in the efforts to achieve sustainable development?

Yes No

18. Has the county or municipality set objectives or targets for local Agenda 21?

- a. Quantitative targets
- b. Qualitative objectives or targets

19. After the local Agenda 21 work was initiated, are there specific examples of political decisions in which considerations of sustainability and dialogue with the public have been given new and increased attention in relation to previously?

Yes No

20. What is the level of activity expected in 1999 compared with that in 1998?

Higher Lower Unchanged

21. Which one or two projects, activities or processes would you mention that could be considered your best practices in local Agenda 21? *Please indicate the title and a few lines on each project and the contact person for each activity. We would especially like positive experience with projects that include the active participation of the general public, project that are intersectoral in the administration and projects led by the administration.*

