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## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN POLICY PLANNING FOR THE NATURE CONSERVATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

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Municipalities implement policies that promote nature conservation. Involving the public in policy-making can improve results. Alongside traditional forms of public participation, the citizen science is becoming an increasingly powerful tool in solving environmental problems. Citizen science successfully provides environmental and biodiversity monitoring data on forest, water, soil conditions, phenological changes and animal migration. It helps create inclusive, effective solutions by integrating local knowledge and linking it to environmental and natural sciences, promotes cooperation and ensures broad support for nature conservation among citizens[1]. Currently, citizen science projects are being implemented in many places with the aim of promoting the sustainable use of ecosystems by improving understanding of environmental problems, and for communities to build a deeper connection with local ecosystems and the management of these resources [2]. Traditional forms of public participation, reinforced by regulatory enactments and policy planning documents, is of great importance in nature conservation processes in municipalities. Analysis of individual examples from Latvia, Sweden and Switzerland provides insight into good practice [3]. Public involvement in nature conservation activities at the municipal level ensures more effective environmental management and fosters a sense of community responsibility. Municipalities can ensure the nature conservation goals while strengthening the connection between residents and their natural environment by inclusive decision-making processes.

### References:

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- [3] Aarhus Convention. The Swedish Environmental Code, 1998. Haninge kommun, 2024.

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