I. GENERAL FRAMEWORK

This is the Danish response to the questionnaire on "Strengthening Government-Citizens Connections" developed by a working group at the OECD.

The answering of the questionnaire has been organised by the Danish Ministry of Finance. The questionnaire has been sent to all 20 Danish ministries, the National Association of Local Authorities in Denmark and the association of County Councils in Denmark.

The answering of the questionnaire in the following pages is based on the responses from the ministries and on other sources, including official reports, WebPages and to a limited degree research results. Where available in English references too relevant WebPages are mentioned in the text.

It should be noted that the responses reported in the sections 1 to 15 below represent examples of activities and mechanisms in relation to government citizen’s connections, not a total mapping.

It should also be emphasized that the responses are based on the situation in 1999, for which reason some of the information could be out-dated.

SECTION 1. GENERAL CONTEXT FOR STRENGTHENING GOVERNMENT-CITIZEN CONNECTIONS

1. Can you briefly explain the overall context – the key problems or issues to address in your country in order to “Strengthen Government-Citizen Connections”?

Decentralisation of policymaking and policy implementation
The Danish political system is characterised by an extensive decentralisation. This means that policymaking and especially policy implementation in many areas is located at the regional or municipal level.

Most social services as for example primary schools, kindergartens, health care and care for the elderly are delivered and organised by either municipalities or counties. Consequently, two thirds of the public employed are employed at the municipal or county level.

This decentralisation is also reflected in the distribution of public expenditure.

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1 Where available in English, descriptions etc. are copied directly from the respective WebPages.
Finally, it should be noted that municipalities and counties have the right to levy their own taxes on property, land and real estate, as well as income tax, within certain national limits set in negotiation with the Ministry of Finance.

Many decisions are still made at the national level, and a bargaining system involving the government, the Association of Local Authorities and the Association of County Councils ensures that local spending stays within the nationally acceptable limits. However, compared to many other countries there is a high degree of decentralisation in Denmark.

**High levels of trust in most parts of the public sector**

In 1998, the Gallup Institute conducted a survey for the Danish Ministry of Finance. 1,571 persons over the age of 15 were surveyed. The objective was to uncover the following aspects of the relations between Danish citizens and the public sector:

- The citizens’ satisfaction with various institutions in the public sector.
- The citizens’ trust in the public sector and public employees.
- The citizens’ general support for the public sector.
- The citizens’ views on introductions of reforms of the public sector i.e. introduction of user charging, outsourcing, citizens’ choice, supplementary services, and voluntary social work.

The overall conclusion from the survey is that Danes are highly supportive of the welfare state. The trust in public institutions is among the highest in the World. The trust in public employees is very high as well. And the satisfaction with public services is high – for some services even increasing over the last years. Furthermore, the willingness to pay taxes has increased markedly from 1990 to 1998, and fewer Danes opt for public sector cutbacks, even if linked to tax reductions.

**High turn out at elections for Parliament, county councils and municipal councils**

Elections are held for the European Parliament, the national parliament (Folketinget), for county councils and for municipal councils. Furthermore, it has become a practice that issues related to new EU treaties and amendments to established EU treaties are decided upon through referenda.

The turnout for the elections and at referenda is fairly high.
Institutionalised involvement of interested parties in the policy making process

As is evident from the responses reported in the sections 1-15 below, there is a high degree of institutionalised involvement of stakeholders in the policy making process in almost every policy area.

Consultation and participation typically takes the form of non-permanent law preparing committees, permanent commissions and/or different forms of written consultation procedures involving stakeholders.

High level of membership in voluntary organisations

On average every Dane between the age of 18 and 70 were a member of 3.2 associations according to a survey made in 1990. A survey from 1999 carried through by the University of Aalborg shows a slight increase in this number.

Only 5.8 percent of the population was not a member of any associations in 1990, which was a declining share compared to the 9.3 percent in 1979. According to the 1999 Aalborg survey just mentioned the proportion of people not being a member of any organisation has become slightly larger in recent years.

The associations can be categorised according to their functions for their members. Associations founded on special groups of the population can be categorised as "group-based associations", whereas associations directed toward the whole population can be categorised as "cause-oriented associations" c.f. table 1 below.
Table 1. Membership of associations, 1979 and 1990. Percent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1979</th>
<th>1990</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18-70</td>
<td>18-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group-based interest associations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primarily economic associations, total</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>76.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Class-based associations</td>
<td>62.2</td>
<td>70.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Client-based associations</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role-based associations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Housing and residential associations</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>44.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Parents’ associations</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Car owners’ associations</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Immigrants’ associations</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Housewives’ associations</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause-oriented interest associations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanitarian associations</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure/cultural associations</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>51.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political associations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Environmental associations</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Women’s’ associations</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Religious associations</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Listeners’ and viewers’ associations</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Consumers’ associations</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Associations with international aims</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Co-operative Retail and Wholesale Society of Denmark</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of memberships on average</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-members (per cent)</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents (N)</td>
<td>1858</td>
<td>1712</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In 1990 76.4 percent of the citizens above the age of 18 were members of associations, which primarily attend to their members’ economic interests. In both 1979 and 1990 class-based associations as unions and the like was the type of associations that attracted most members.

Some of the group-based associations target citizens who have a certain position in society. In total, almost half the adult population belong to one or more associations among this group of role-based associations. Especially the housing and residential associations attract a large share of the population.

Among the Cause-oriented interest associations the associations with humanitarian causes attract a rising share of the population. Thus, 15.8 percent were members of a humanitarian association in 1979 while the number has risen to 22.9 percent in 1990. About 50 pct. of the population is a member of an association related to leisure-time activities or which has cultural aims. This proportion is unchanged from 1979 to 1990.
The fact that the political parties in Denmark have experienced a declining number of members has not affected the popularity of the political interest associations. From 1979 to 1990 the share of the population with membership in a political interest association has risen from 19.0 percent to 28.8 percent. This is mainly due to the success of the environmental associations, which have more than tripled their popularity in an 11 year-period.

**Concern about the state of democracy**

There are many signs of a strong Danish democracy. However, attention to the state and future of democracy is also prevalent in Denmark.

The Danish Study of Democracy and Power is the most prominent expression of this attention.

The Danish Study of Democracy and Power was initiated by the Danish Parliament after a report from March 19, 1997 by the "Committee for an Analysis of Democracy and Power in Denmark".

The purpose of the study was stated in this report:

> The purpose of this new initiative is to illuminate the function of democracy in broad terms, including the influence of organizations, movements, and economic power structures in society as well as the consequences of internationalization as far as transparency of decisions, influence and power in society.

Later, the report states that the objective is to create a framework for research that ... in a systematic way can get to the core of democracy discussions and dilemmas in a modern welfare state at the threshold to a new century, and uncover channels of power and influence in a society in touch with the global and technological reality.

An independent steering committee has been established to organise the study, and the project is financed by a DKK 50 million government grant.

The Steering Committee has interpreted its mandate as follows: to carry out an analysis of *the state of the Danish democracy* at the entrance to the 21st century. The analysis will include, in addition to classical political institutions, social relations that are relevant for the function of democracy. Therefore, the point of departure will be individual citizens as well as political institutions and the underlying social processes.

The Steering Committee has chosen to divide the area into five general, overlapping topics:

- The individual as user and citizen
- Political institutions
- Origin, content and consequences of political decisions
- Societal processes of change
- Concepts of democracy and power

With these general topics, the Danish Democracy and Power Study continues the research traditions from the Norwegian power study in the 1970s and the Swedish power study in the 1980s. However, it also expresses an effort to go even further and include subjects that were less promi-
nent in the earlier democracy and power studies, i.e., emphasis on content of political decisions, opinion formation and the significance of social change.

In addition, the Steering Committee stresses the importance of both a historical and a comparative perspective. The task will be to place "Denmark in the year 2000" in time and space. The Study is motivated, among other things, by a sense that democracy no longer works as it did in the classical descriptions of Danish democracy.

More information on The Danish Democracy and Power Study can be found on the Internet at the following address: http://www.ps.au.dk/magtudredningen/Engelsk/frame.htm.

General information
General information about Denmark, including the political system, can be found on the Internet at the following address: http://www.um.dk/english/danmark/
Section 2. LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

2. What laws and policies have been adopted (or are in the process of being adopted), and what are their key points, in the areas listed below?

2.1 To better understand and respond to citizen demands?
2.2 To ensure citizen access to information and to promote its dissemination?
2.3 To promote consultation and active citizen participation in government decision-making processes?
2.4 To support the use of new information technologies to strengthen government-citizen relations?

3. What government information, if any, is not made accessible to the public?

The Access to Public Administration Files Act (Offentlighedsloven)
The Danish Access to Public Administration Files Act states that, subject to specific exceptions, any person may demand access to documents received or issued by an administrative authority in the course of its activity. Furthermore, subject to specific exceptions, any person whose personal circumstances are referred to in a document may demand access to such references.

The right of access to administration files applies to all documents relating to the matter in question. This includes duplicate copies of letters issued by the authority concerned, provided that such letters must be assumed to have reached the addressee. Furthermore the right to access applies to entries in journals, registers, and other lists relating to the documents of the matter in question.

Moreover, in any matter to be decided on by an administrative authority, an authority receiving information by word of mouth on facts of importance to the decision or in other manner having notice of such facts, shall make a written note of the substance of such information.

As mentioned above the right of access to administration files does not apply to some documents and information. The following documents could be mentioned as examples of what the act does not apply to:

- Internal case material.
- Correspondence between ministries if the correspondence is produced in the process of drafting bills.
- Information on the private circumstances of individual persons.
- Information on technical issues related to business procedures and the like.

An English translation of the act is enclosed as appendix 1.

The Public Administration Act (Forvaltningsloven)
In the Public Administration Act it is specified what the duties of the civil servants are:

First, it states that any person within the public administration shall be disqualified relative to any specific matter if, for example, he or she, his or her relatives, any other closely related per-
son, or any private legal entity to which he or she is related is particularly interested personally or financially in the outcome of the matter.

Second, the Act states that an administrative authority shall, to the extent required, give guidance and assistance to any person who enquires in matters within their purview. Any written enquiry that does not concern the purview of the administrative authority, to which it has been sent, shall as far as possible be forwarded to the proper authority.

Third, any person may demand access to documents in accordance with the Danish Access to Public Administration Files Act.

Fourth, if a party to a matter cannot be assumed to have notice that an authority is in possession of specific information on the facts of the matter, and the information is unfavourable to the party, no decision shall be made until the authority has notified that party of such information, and has given him or her an opportunity to make a statement.

Fifth, grounds shall accompany a decision communicated in writing. Any person who has been notified of a decision by word of mouth may demand that written grounds for the decision be given, if a decision is not in favour of the person concerned.

Sixth, any decision delivered in writing from which appeal lies to another administration authority shall be accompanied by written guidance on the right to appeal, stating where to appeal and informing of the procedure for lodging of appeal, including any time limit for so doing. However, this does not apply if the decision is in every particular favourable to the parties concerned.

Seventh, any person acting within the public administration is bound by professional secrecy, whenever information is designated as confidential by statute or other legally binding provision or whenever it is otherwise necessary to keep the information secret to protect public or private interests.

Moreover, information on any individual’s strictly private circumstances, including information on race, religious belief and colour of skin, on membership of political or other societies, on sexual behaviour, criminal offences, on health, and on severe social problems and drug abuse and the like, shall not be passed on to another administration authority.

Finally, any person acting within the public administration may not use his position to obtain confidential information which has no relevance to the performance of his duties.

An English translation of the act is enclosed as appendix 2.

Bill on protection of personal data
A bill, proposed by the Danish Minister of Justice, on the implementation of a more modern general legislation on the treatment of personal information, as well as the implementation of EC-directive 95/46/EF regarding the same issue was passed in 2000.

The bill combines the general rules on treatment of personal information by 1) public authorities and 2) the private sector in one law. In principal, it encompasses all authorities, enterprises etc. treating personal information.
The bill lays down more specified rules stating the cases in which personal information can be dealt with, i.e. can be collected, kept, registered, employed and redistributed etc.

In addition, the bill includes rules on security which for instance implies, that the person responsible for the data are required to make the necessary arrangements to prevent its destruction, abuse or the like.

Furthermore, the bill includes provisions stating that all use of personal information, subject to some exemptions, should be notified to the proper supervisory authority, prior to its use.

The "typical" law making process
When a ministry is preparing a bill, other relevant ministries are typically consulted in an early phase.

In accordance with the Prime Minister’s recent appeal, many ministries present new bills on their homepages on the Internet for consultation before the bill is presented to parliament. When presented to Parliament, bills are published on the Parliaments homepage (http://www.folketinget.dk). All laws and official guidelines etc. can be downloaded (in Danish only) from the Internet at the following address: www.retsinfo.dk

Ad hoc committees typically precede larger reforms or major amendments. The ad hoc committees often consist of representatives of relevant authorities and organisations. A committee will often issue a report with recommendations regarding the reform or amendment. Bills are often drafted on the background of such reports.

Relevant authorities and organisations are then typically consulted on the formulation and expected consequences of the bill. This consultation typically takes the form of a written procedure. The Parliament is then informed about the reactions to the bill along with the minister's comments to these reactions.

No matter which ministry proposes the bill, bills affecting business are typically presented before the Ministry of Trade and Industry's Business Test Panels described in section 2.4 below.

After this process of information and consultation a revised bill is presented to Parliament for consideration.

The procedure for making laws naturally varies from one bill to another. However, as a principal rule stakeholders, whether representing civil society or business, are consulted.

For further information on the law making process please consult chapter 2 in the OECD report on regulatory reform in Denmark that was published in 2000.

Principles of openness, access and information in the municipalities
Legal and policy frameworks for openness, access and information in the municipalities and counties are presented in section 11.2 below.
4. Can you provide examples of policy sectors where special laws or policies are in place that:

4.1 Emphasise access to information (e.g. information to promote public health, information to protect consumers, etc.)?
4.2 Promote citizen consultation and active participation in decision-making (e.g. referenda or public consultation processes on regional development plans, development of public facilities, or environmental impacts of a project)?

Examples of laws and practices are given in the presentation of the contribution from the ministries etc. in the below. As prominent examples the following could be mentioned:

- Many user boards in institutions delivering social services are established by law.
- § 62 of the Local Government Act states that the municipality council shall account to the residents of the local area for the contents and the extent of the major public services offered or intended to be offered to the residents of the local area. The statement is required to include information about the goals which the municipality council has identified for the development in the respective areas. The statement shall be rendered at least every second year.
- The Law on Right of Access to Information Related to Environmental Issues supplements the Access to Public Administration Files Act and the Public Administration Act as it implements the EF-directive 90/313/EEF regarding free access to information related to Environmental Issues. The Law on Right of Access to Information Related to Environmental Issues gives "everybody" access to documents related to environmental issues.
- The involvement of stakeholders in labour market policies is to a large degree established by law.
- In 1997 the Parliament passed the Act on Legal Protection and Administration in Social Affairs (Lov om retssikkerhed og administration på det sociale område). The purpose of the law is to safeguard citizens' rights and citizens' influence as regards to handling social cases by authorities in municipalities and counties.
- Pursuant to the Act on Integration of Foreigners in Denmark (the Integration Act) from 1998 a municipality must set up an Integration Council if more than 50 citizens above the age of 18 request therefore in a joint written request. Furthermore the Integration Act states that the Minister of the Interior must establish a national committee of representatives consisting of the members of the local Integration Councils representing the ethnic minorities.
SECTION 3. IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS AND PRACTICES

5. What is being done to promote or ensure that these laws and policies are actually implemented?

5.1 What kinds of institutions (e.g. special department or agency, commission, task force, ombudsman, institutions for preventing or resolving disputes, etc) are in place?

5.2 What co-ordination, if any is undertaken through these institutions between the central and local levels of government?

The Parliamentary Ombudsman

The Parliament after each general election and when a vacancy occurs elect the Parliamentary Ombudsman. On behalf of the Parliament, the Ombudsman oversees the civil and military central government administration and to some extent the local government administration. In terms of organisation the institution is thus linked to the Parliament.

As an appeal authority for decisions of administrative law, the Ombudsman is often involved as an alternative to court examination. This is partly because complaints cannot be lodged with the Ombudsman until the administrative recourse has been used, partly because an Ombudsman investigation does not involve court fees and usually no legal costs either. Moreover, it is usually quicker than a court case. The Ombudsman’s assessment basis is largely identical with that of the courts of law. However, in some respects it is broader, as the Ombudsman may for instance consider questions of good administrative practice, reasonable case processing time, correct behaviour by public servants, the organisation of institutions etc.

It is a characteristic of the Ombudsman that, unlike an administrative recourse authority or the courts of law, he or she cannot alter an administrative authority’s decision. As a general rule, the Ombudsman can only state his or hers opinion of the case. The Ombudsman may for instance criticise a decision or ask the authority to change or review it. Such recommendations are almost always complied with.

Another characteristic of the institution is that the Ombudsman can reject cases, even though they meet the ordinary complaint conditions, and take up cases for investigation on his or hers own initiative. The Ombudsman’s investigation of a complaint, unlike that of a court of law, thus is not restricted to the allegations and statements of the complainant.

The Consumers’ Ombudsman

The Consumers’ Ombudsman oversees that private companies or equivalent public enterprises do not contravene with good marketing practices; the competition law's additional provisions; or provisions laid down by the Minister of Trade and Industry.

The Consumers’ Ombudsman aims to influence business to act in accordance with the law and the provisions laid down by the Minister of Trade and Industry. This is mainly done through negotiations. The Consumers’ Ombudsman can do this on his or hers own initiative or against a background of complaints and applications.

The Consumers’ Ombudsman can take legal action at the Maritime and Commercial Court to obtain prohibition against certain actions that are at variance with the marketing law. If the purpose
of a prohibition is in danger of being wasted, the Consumers’ Ombudsman can independently issue a provisional injunction, but a lawsuit on affirmation of the injunction must be filed at the latest on the following workday.

6. What kind of tools are being predominantly used, and how are they being used:

6.1 To better understand and respond to citizen demands?
6.2 To inform citizens?
6.3 To consult with them?
6.4 To encourage their active participation?
6.5 To customise service and interactions?
6.6 Are new tools being added to complement the old, or are they replacing the old tools?

Examples of laws and practices are given in the presentation of the contribution from the ministries etc. in the sections 1-15 below. The examples includes:

- surveys,
- hearings,
- public meetings,
- possibility of presenting one’s cases before the standing committees in Parliament,
- possibility of presenting one’s cases before the minister,
- law preparing committees,
- user panels and user councils in state, county and municipal institutions
- extensive use of homepages, including especially the Parliament’s homepage giving access to bills and other relevant documents and information
- the Service and Welfare project creating a frame for consultation, information and participation for professionals and citizens alike

Special attention could be paid to the following three examples.

First, the Advisory Council on European Affairs could be mentioned. This council was established by the Government in October 1993 for four years to serve as a forum for debate and advise concerning the general European aspects of problems relating to policies in the European Union. In 1997 the mandate for the Advisory Council was extended to 2001.

In 1999, the Advisory Council consisted of approximately 200 members with different backgrounds. Members represent a broad spectrum of views on how relations should be between Denmark and The European Union, reaching from support to a sceptic attitude.

Since 1993 the Advisory Council has held many meetings on a regular basis and has arranged many conferences, seminars and similar events.

The Advisory Council has made a considerable contribution to promoting active citizen participation in the public debate in Denmark and the views expressed have been taken into consideration in the Danish political decision making process in regards to matters relating to European affairs.
Second, attention could be paid to the number of laws establishing that municipality councils must establish user boards in a range of service delivering institutions. The purpose of establishing the user boards is to strengthen democracy, to ensure that services are delivered in a way adjusted to local needs and to increase citizens awareness of resource limitations. Most user boards are found within the areas of social services and education, including for example kindergartens, primary schools and high schools.

Third, one could mention the Business Test Panel. To obtain information on the likely administrative consequences for enterprises before new legislation is passed or new executive orders are issued Denmark has established Business Test Panels. The focus of the Test Panels is only on the administrative burdens of Acts and Executive Orders. The Test Panels consist of 1,500 enterprises divided into three panels with 500 businesses each. The Test Panels are unique because the businesses themselves are consulted on the administrative burdens of proposed legislation.
SECTION 4. EVALUATING RESULTS

7. How does the government evaluate the impacts of its laws and policies concerning information, citizen consultation and active participation? What were the principal conclusions of these evaluations?

8. How does the administration evaluate the impacts of its use of different tools in strengthening government-citizen connections? What were the principal conclusions?

In general, evaluation in Denmark is carried through ad hoc. However, recently new evaluation institutions have been set up with the purpose of doing systematic repeated evaluations in the health sector and in the education sector. Furthermore evaluation is an integrated element in the recent labour market reform and the laws on green taxes. Finally one could mention the initiative on the surveillance of the quality and consequences of laws as well as the established procedures for assessment of new technologies.

Some institutions for systematic evaluation are thus in place, but generally evaluations are carried out ad hoc. This general conclusion is also valid in regard to evaluation of laws and practises concerning information, consultation and active participation.

It can be noted that only few of the responding ministries etc. have given responses to section 4 in the questionnaire on evaluating results.

The Power and Democracy Project mentioned in section Error! Reference source not found. above can be seen as an example of an ad hoc analysis regarding the issues dealt with in the questionnaire.

9. Have new technologies affected the relationship between the government and the citizen?

10. Can you describe examples of “promising practices,” including key factors or conditions contributing to their success, addressing:

10.1 Information for citizens?
10.2 Citizen consultation/active participation, either directly with individuals, and/or through intermediaries representing the public (e.g. NGOs, social partners)?

11. In considering examples of practices that worked less well, what were the main factors impeding their success? How can such difficulties be overcome?

Examples are given in the presentation of the response to the questionnaire from the Ministry of Research and Information Technology in section 1 below and the description of the Service and Welfare project described in the section with the response from the Ministry of Finance reported in section 14.

The Service and Welfare project aims at stimulating exchange of experiences and at enhancing public debate on the future of the Danish Welfare Society. As part of the project a Web Site has been established. This site forms the communicative axis of the Service & Welfare project with forums in which public managers and employees can co-ordinate experiments of renewal and exchange practices and issues of professional interest. Furthermore, citizens, users and employees.
can exchange views and opinions about core issues regarding the challenges of the welfare society in general and the public sector in particular.

As regards the initiatives from the Ministry of Research and Information Technology one could mention the establishment of a national Web Site (www.danmark.dk) with addresses and short descriptions of most public institutions and authorities. Furthermore information regarding specific life situations and policy areas are provided.

1 Ministry of Labour

1.1 Introduction

The central authorities in the Danish Labour Market Model are the Department of the Ministry of Labour, the National Labour Market Authority and two directorates, as well as councils and committees with representatives of the social partners. It is the responsibility of these bodies to implement the labour market policy and working environment policy.

The Ministry of Labour is the supreme policy-making and administrative authority in labour market matters. The Minister of Labour is advised and assisted by the Department of the Ministry of Labour, which is headed by a Permanent Secretary. In addition the Department comprises 8 divisions and a Secretariat for International Co-ordination and Labour Market Policy Systems (SISA). Other institutions under the Ministry of Labour are The Directorate of the Working Environment Service, the National Labour Market Authority, the Directorate of the Unemployment Insurance System. In addition there are some independent institutions, namely the Labour Market Appeal Board, the Public Conciliation Service and the Industrial Court. The most important councils are the National Labour Market Council, the Vocational Training Council, the Working Environment Council and the Council for Vocational Guidance.

The Ministry of Labour is responsible for:

- Labour law matters, including industrial relations, incomes policy initiatives and legislation concerning the Public Conciliation Service and the Industrial Court, the Labour Market Supplementary Pensions Scheme (ATP), the Employees’ Guarantee Fund, legislation with respect to salaried employees, holiday legislation, etc.
- The unemployment insurance system, the voluntary early retirement pay scheme and the transitional allowance scheme.
- Working environment regulation (health and safety at work).
- The public employment service and labour market training, including adult vocational training, training courses for unskilled workers, and retraining.
- Employment and training activities, enterprise allowance schemes and programmes for unemployed persons.
- At the international level, the Ministry of Labour takes part in the work of the EU, the OECD, the ILO, the Council of Europe and in Nordic co-operation.

More information about the Ministry of Labour can be found at the following address on the Internet http://www.am.dk/english/default.asp.

1.2 General context
There is a longstanding tradition of co-operation between government on the one side and the unions and the employers’ organisations on the other side regarding policy formulation and implementation in connection to the labour market.

All three parties have a responsibility in the process, and this common responsibility is to a large degree institutionalised.

It is the assessment by the Ministry of Labour that the implementation of labour market policies is eased by the involvement of the unions and the employers’ organisations in policy formulation.

Compared to other countries, the Danish labour market is characterised by a high degree of regulation by voluntary agreements between the unions and the employers’ organisations and a low degree of regulation by laws.

The unions and the employers’ organisations are themselves responsible for the regulation of wages and working conditions.

Approximately 88 percent of the wage earners are members of unions. Companies, which are members of employer’s organisations, employ approximately 53 pct. of the wage earners in the private sector.

1.3 Legal and policy framework

The involvement of the unions and the employers’ organisations in the formulation and implementation of labour market policies is laid down in “The law on active labour market policy” as passed by the Parliament in 1993.

At the national level the unions and the employer’s organisations are represented in The National Labour Council. This council advises the minister of labour on an ongoing basis on all questions with relevance to labour market policy. In practice very few bills are presented to Parliament and few initiatives are taken without the acceptance of the council.

At the regional level the unions and the employer’s organisations are represented in the 13 Regional Labour Councils. These councils on an ongoing basis adjust the national labour market policy to the regional needs and conditions within the national economic frames and performance targets formulated in corporation between the Ministry of Labour and The National Labour Council.

All in all, reforms and changes in the labour market policy are formulated and implemented in close institutionalised co-operation between the Ministry of Labour on the one side and the unions and the employer’s organisations on the other side.

Furthermore a range of tasks are undertaken by the unions and the employer’s organisations themselves or in close co-operation with the public sector. Among the examples are unemployment insurance and in-service training, which in some other countries are the sole responsibility of the public sector.

The involvement of the unions and the employer’s organisations has been and still is an important element in the formulation of regulation regarding health and safety at work and the ongoing ad-
administration hereof. This involvement is institutionalised in the Work Environment Council which according to the Health and Safety at Work Act must be consulted/involved when new rules are made. Likewise the unions and the employer’s organisations have a seat in the Labour Market Board of Appeal, which settles complaints about decisions made in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act.

Thus, the involvement of the unions and the employer’s organisations in the Work Environment Council and the 11 Trade Work Environment Councils is an important feature in the communication between the public sector and business when it comes to information regarding work environment.

1.4 Implementation Tools and Practices

The involvement of the unions and the employer’s organisations is already an integrated part of the decision making processes and no initiatives are currently planned so as to strengthen the government-citizen connections further. Nonetheless, evaluations and adjustments are carried through from time to time so as to enhance efficiency, effectiveness and communication.

1.5 Information

The Ministry of Labour publishes three kinds of pamphlets: 1) pamphlets on the labour market system, 2) pamphlets on specific laws and their implementation and 3) pamphlets on the ongoing development in the labour market.

The Ministry of Labour also answers calls from citizens, organisations, politicians, and lawyers.

All general information with relation to the Ministry of Labour and its activities are available on the Internet.

There has been an increasing use of the Internet as regards information to the citizens.
2 Ministry of Trade and Industry

2.1 Introduction

Information about the Ministry of trade and industry can be found at the following address on the Internet www.em.dk

2.2 General context

During the last decade the Ministry of Trade and Industry has placed a high emphasis on involving citizens in the development of policies as an alternative to more traditional ways of formulating policy.

The purpose of involving the citizens is twofold.

- First, to heighten the quality of decisions. Through the involvement of citizens’ input in terms of knowledge, new ideas and professional expertise is secured.
- Second, to reinforce the legitimacy of decisions in order to facilitate their implementation.

The emphasis on dialogue follows the corporative decision-making tradition but also involves a more extensive involvement of individuals, experts, companies and organisations.

2.3 Legal and policy framework

Marketing Practice Act (Markedsføringsloven)
The Consumers' Ombudsman administers the Marketing Practice Act. According to § 17 in the law establishing the legal foundation for the institution, the Consumers' Ombudsman after negotiations with organisations from business and consumers’ organisations formulate guidelines. The guidelines establish the content of the concept "good marketing practice" within specific areas.

The Consumers’ Ombudsman has until now issued 19 guidelines.

It is established as a general principle that the Consumers' Ombudsman must use negotiation as the primary tool in securing compliance with the law. The provision that the guidelines are to be established through negotiation reflects this general principle.

The Accounting Council
The Accounting Council has been established in accordance with the Law on Annual Accounts (Årsregnskabsloven). The Ministry of Trade and Industry (especially the Danish Commerce and Companies Agency) consults the council on matters related to accounting.

In 1999 the council was consulted in connection to the preparation of a law on annual accounts and a law on bookkeeping. The council also participated in drafting the guidelines following the law on bookkeeping.
The Accounting Council is made up of representatives from the accountants’ organisations, banks, lawyers, industry, finance experts, trade unions and the co-operative movement. The Danish Commerce and Companies Agency chairs the Council and forms the secretariat.

*The advisory committee on trade of property/real estate*

The advisory committee on trade of property is consulted on matters related to the administration and formulation of guidelines in relation to the Law on Trade of Property.

The committee is consulted on matters related to the law and can raise issues on relevant matters on its own initiative.

The Danish Commerce and Companies Agency appoint the committee. The chair and vice chair must represent expert knowledge within law and economics and must be independent of interested parties. Besides the chair and the vice chair the appointed committee members represents the following organisations:

- The union of Danish estate-agents
- Danish Bar and Law Society (http://www.advokatsamfundet.dk)
- The Danish Consumer Council (http://www.fbr.dk/)
- The National Association of Home-Owners
- The National Association of Land-Owners
- The Danish Council of Insurance and Pension
- Danish Bankers Association (http://www.finansraadet.dk/finansraadet/finans.nsf/links/index_eng)
- The Mortgage-credit Council

*Other committees etc.*

Besides the councils etc. mentioned above The Accountant Commission and The Advisory Committee on Industrial Property Rights has been established by law. Both institutions are consulted, and have the right to make proposals and statements on their own initiative. Contrary to the councils etc. mentioned above these two committees only represents business, and therefore do not involve citizens in the sense used in the OECD questionnaire.

2.4 Implementation tools and practises

*Formulating a bio-ethical policy*  
Which visions - and dangers - are associated with the development of biotechnology and genetically engineering? How is ethical points represented in the public debate? And how can ethics become an active part of our decisions on how to develop and use biotechnology?

Recognising the importance - and the difficulties - of these questions the Minister for Trade and Industry set up a committee in 1997 to create a basis for a debate on future bio-ethical policy. The committee was composed of experts in natural sciences, medical science, social science and philosophy. To complement the work of the committee, a series of meetings was held with a broader group of companies, grassroot-organisations and consumer-organisations. The aim was to bring together a diverse group of individuals with very different points of view on the subject matter.
Spring 1999 the committee put forward a discussion paper highlighting the wide array of opinions and recommending a set of ethical criteria. The discussion paper constitutes the basis for the ongoing development of a bio-ethical policy within the Danish government.

A strategy for growth for the IT/Tele/Electronics Industry
With the aim to provide companies with attractive framework conditions, the Danish government in 1998 released a strategy for the IT/Tele/Electronics industry. The strategy was the outcome of a unique and fruitful dialogue with the industry and included all national and international framework conditions of relevance to this industry. The strategy touches on such diverse aspects as public regulation, access to knowledge, access to capital, public/private interaction and international competition.

During the strategy-work the industry submitted not less than 154 proposals, 105 of which were incorporated in the strategy. As appears from this, the industry left its mark on the final government strategy. Similarly, the industry is due to play an important part in connection with the realisation of the strategy and it has committed itself to a number of initiatives.

At the launch of the strategy the industry’s enterprises and organisations were invited to submit their proposals for the contents of the strategy. Simultaneously, the Ministry of Trade and Industry offered the opportunity, through its homepage for the project, to surf all over the world for inspiration from the countries Denmark competes with (http://dialog.em.dk/itpro/)

The Business Hotline (Erhvervslivets Hotline)
Regulation is important to a modern society because it creates the foundation for the often very complex interchanges taking place. The regulation provides us with predictable and transparent rules of interaction. At the same time the very complex regulation of a modern society easily becomes an administrative burden for the companies. This is not least true for small and medium size companies.

Recognising the need to provide customised information to the companies and meet their needs for fast, correct guidance the Danish Agency for Trade and Industry has set up a Business Hotline offering free advise on public regulation and schemes. The hotline operates a call-centre service combining the general expertise of a core unit located in the agency with an extensive network of experts in the relevant public authorities. Furthermore, the hotline operates two user-friendly Internet-guides:

The business-guide gives the companies a general introduction to regulation concerning the relationship between the company, the employees, the customers and the public authorities (www.virksomhedsguide.dk).

The guide to subsidies, guarantees and loan-schemes provides the companies with information regarding all national schemes directed towards companies - e.g. subsidies to the development of new products or the implementation of environmentally balanced technologies (www.tilskudsguide.dk).

www.indberetning.dk
The Danish Government has decided that all forms, which are used by businesses when communicating with public authorities, should be available on the Internet.
Therefore, the Government has established an Internet service called: Indberetning.dk (www.indberetning.dk). This service is an Internet portal, which makes it possible for the enterprises to form a general view of the public reports that they should comply with.

**Business Test Panels**

To obtain information on the likely administrative consequences for enterprises before new legislation is passed or new executive orders are issued Denmark has established Business Test Panels. The focus of the Test Panels is only on the administrative burdens of Acts and Executive Orders. The Test Panels consist of 1,500 enterprises divided into three panels with 500 businesses each. The Test Panels are unique because the businesses themselves are consulted on the administrative burdens of proposed legislation.

The Test Panels do not replace the traditional public consultation where business organisations etc. are consulted in the legislative process - they are a supplement. Acts and Executive Orders are usually presented to the Test Panels parallel with the traditional public consultation.

When a Bill or a draft Executive Order influences only a very small line of business, it will not be possible for the Test Panels to assess it. Therefore, in such cases a Focus Panel is formed. A Focus Panel consists of about 60-100 businesses from the relevant line of business, and these businesses are interviewed by telephone.
3 Ministry of Research and Information Technology

3.1 Introduction

The Ministry of Research and Information Technology is politically responsible for research, information technology and telecommunications.

The Ministry of Research and Information Technology was established as an independent ministry in January 1993 with the task of co-ordinating Denmark’s efforts in the field of research.

The Ministry employs some 140 staff, and has a total budget appropriation for costs of some DKK 2 billion in 2001.

A number of institutions and commissions are associated with the Ministry of Research and Information Technology - such as the Danish Research Agency, Risø National Laboratory, the National Telecom Agency and the Danish State Information Service.

More information about the Ministry of Research and Information Technology can be found at the following address on the Internet http://www.fsk.dk

3.2 General context

It is the aim of the Ministry of Research and Information Technology to stimulate democratic debate and to empower citizens vis-à-vis government by improving the public’s information base. Open government and better access to government information are key measures to this end.

3.3 Legal and policy framework

A number of Government Action plans for the development of the information society have since 1994 set out targets that are to insure public access to government information through use of information technology.

An English version of the “Action for change 97” can be found at www.fsk.dk/cgi-bin/docs-show.cgi?doc_id=14108.

The Ministry of Justice provides free electronic access to legal material including bills as part of the Government Action plans for the development of the information society.

3.4 Implementation tools and practises

The Ministry of Research and Information Technology is responsible for the development of overall strategies on development of the information society. However implementation of the strategies is principally the responsibility of the relevant sector ministries and institutions.

When it comes to use of IT as a means for dissemination of information, a joint state, regional, local task force has been set up to insure co-ordination and cohesion between initiatives at the various levels.
Tools for consultation, information and participation

Surveys are a common instrument to better understand and respond to citizens’ demands.

E-mail addresses and web sites at all major public institutions are goals set out in the Government Action Plans for the development of the information society. Part of the idea is to use these tools to encourage participation by giving access to information and make it easy to respond or react to the information given.

Television is also used mainly at the national level for providing general information about new laws, hazards, services etc.

The Ministry of Research and Information Technology has issued standards for electronic Government net-publications. A public link service has been established (www.detoffentlige.dk). The aim of the link service is to tie Government, regional and local websites together on relevant subjects thereby making it easier for citizens to find their way around Internet based public information and services.

The Internet based tools have not yet replaced more traditional ways of communicating with the citizens and should therefore be seen as an increase in options and possibilities for the citizens. However Internet based tools are receiving more and more attention when it comes to government – citizens communication.

Facilitation of Citizens use of IT

The Government has undertaken great efforts to increase the IT-skills of the civil servants. One of the aims being that well trained staff can make better use of information technologies to improve service and information dissemination in order to benefit citizens.

Liberalisation of the telecom market in order to reduce prices is aimed at the development of the information society as such but it also carries weight in relation to citizens use of IT in relations with the government.

Giving easy access to the Internet for all Citizens has been an important goal in the government action plans for development of the information society. This has included

- free Internet access from public libraries,
- support for development of (Danish) synthetic speech recognition,
- design programmes for user friendly software for handicapped,
- continued development of an Internet portal (www.danmark.dk) giving access to all Internet based public services.

3.5 Evaluation and information

Ad hoc statistical surveys have been carried out to evaluate the position of the public sector in the use of Internet technology. One of the principal conclusions of a large survey from 1999 on government use of information technology in communication with the citizens was that there are a little less than 2000 public web sites in Denmark out of approx. 24,000 public institutions. This figure includes all institutions (nurseries, schools, police districts etc.). Coverage is much higher at central levels than at local and institution levels.
Another conclusion was that civil servants do not consider television to be an important tool in communicating with the citizens.

**Effect of new technologies on government-citizen connections**

There is no doubt that new information technology (IT) has made it easier for the citizens to access public information. The mere fact that citizens expects more and better government information suggests that savings, in not having to distribute all information based on paper, are obtained at a general level. However raising expectations to the volume and updatedness of public information may increase the cost of keeping citizens informed.

**A promising practise - an official door to Denmark**

Www.danmark.dk is the official home page of Denmark. Opened in 1997, the web site in 1999 received between 27,000 and 30,000 daily hits - an average of 90,000 visitors a month.

The web site is managed by the Danish State Information Service and offers easy access to information about Denmark. More than 1,000 articles give information about matters of concern to Danish citizens, for instance how to apply for a student grant if you are a mature student or where to register a change of address. A directory of all local and governmental authorities and many private organisations provides useful information about 14,000 organisations and 42,000 employees, including addresses, phone numbers and email addresses and, where possible, internet links to homepages. Www.danmark.dk lists legislative activity in the Danish Parliament by including daily updated information about Bills, Acts of Parliament and Departmental Orders. Details of publications published by agencies and governmental committees, such as white papers, reports and reviews, are listed along with information about how to order them. A news service highlights parliamentary initiatives that might be of interest to the Danes.

With a layout that is simple and easy to use even for people without any previous experience in using the World Wide Web, www.danmark.dk is a service directed at both the general public, employees within the public sector, and private companies and organisations.

The most important purpose of www.danmark.dk is to give Danish citizens an overview of the Danish public sector. It aims to be the obvious starting point for any Internet search for information about public services in Denmark. A visitor to www.danmark.dk will be able to link to all local and national authorities with home pages on the World Wide Web.

Www.danmark.dk is an information service based on the needs of the general public. It provides access to correct and updated information, also outside of normal opening hours.

The Danish State Information Service has recognised that while easy access to correct and updated information is essential, the general public is not concerned with who delivers that information. In other words, the source of information must be 100% reliable, but not all information has to lie within www.danmark.dk itself, if an internet link to another authority provides the citizens with easily accessible and accurate information.

One of the most successfull features in denmark.dk is the **Topics Section** which contains information that is relevant to most Danish citizens everyday life. The purpose of the section is to give general information about many subjects as well as guiding users to information from the relevant authorities.
The Life Circle

It is based on the Life Circle which illustrates various situations that most people are likely to experience throughout their lives, such as attending school, moving away from home, getting married, having children and becoming a pensioner. Using the life situations in the Life Circle as a starting point, users of www.danmark.dk can click their way to more than 1,000 articles containing useful information about each of these situations. Via the Life Circle, a user can find out at which office to register a change of address or how to apply for financial assistance and so on. In most cases there is also an Internet link to the appropriate authority so that the visitor to www.danmark.dk can continue the search for information or simply contact the office via the World Wide Web.

Each article is written in a clear and concise style suited for Internet use, interpreting rules and regulations in a way that makes the information easily understood by everyone. The articles are written by journalists in the Danish State Information Service and edited in co-operation with the relevant authorities. It is thereby ensured that the information given is brief, but accurate, and that visitors to www.danmark.dk have the possibility of finding more information by linking to the appropriate authorities. The addresses and links to organisations and local and national authorities are provided by the large database that is the cornerstone of the Authorities section of www.danmark.dk.
4 Ministry of Culture

4.1 Introduction

The Danish Ministry of Culture is a comparatively young ministry, having existed for only 35 years.

The ministry’s field of responsibility has always been multifarious. The postal service, Folk High Schools and environmental conservation were, at periods, the responsibility of the Danish Ministry of Culture. Today the ministry’s domain stretches from sports to libraries, museums, education and training in the arts; theatre and music; all the creative arts; and government responsibilities regarding the electronic media.

Cultural funding is guaranteed in the yearly Finance Act (Budget), topped up by licence fees and money raised by the football pools and the national lottery. The Danish Ministry of Culture’s budget for 1999 is DKK 7.1 billion.

More information about the Ministry of Culture can be found at the following address on the Internet http://www.kum.dk/kum.asp?lang=2&color=0&file=./uk/default.asp.

4.2 General context

Formulation of policies and laws within the framework of the Ministry of Culture follows the traditional law making procedure in Denmark. This implies that administration is based on "openness", that bills are put forward to public debate and that consultation with interested parties, including organisations, is an established part of policy formulation.

Typically, laws prepared for Parliament by the Ministry of Culture are formulated on the basis of analyses and discussions in the non-permanent law preparing committees. Representatives from the ministry typically chair these committees, but the ordinary members are representatives of interested parties and capacities within the field in question.

4.3 Legal and policy framework

Citizens’ demands and expectations in relation to policy areas, which are the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture, are communicated to the ministry through the law making process, through surveys and examination, and through direct contact with citizens.

Every fifth year the Danish National Institute of Social Research (www.sfi.dk) conducts a survey on the citizens’ leisure and cultural activities. The surveys have been conducted since 1964 for the Ministry of Culture.

Through these surveys the ministry gets a picture of the development in the use of cultural institutions etc. The research results are used as inspiration when formulating laws and policies.

The Ministry of Culture has maintained the old tradition of having fixed hours once a week where individual citizens or groups of citizens can meet directly with the minister, presenting their opinions and cases. On a regular basis the minister moves the “office hours” from the ministry in Copenhagen to different parts of the country.
During the law making process all bills are published on the homepages of the ministry and the Parliament.

As a contribution to the 1995 national action plan on implementation of IT, the Ministry of Culture has established the so-called "Culture Net Denmark". The purpose is to provide better information about and access to those Danish cultural institutions which receives state funds. The institutions themselves decides whether they want to join the net and which information to provide. The institutions are responsible for updating the information.

4.4 Implementation tools and practises

The implementation of laws and policies is done by the underlying institutions of the Ministry of Culture. These institutions get their grants from the ministry, and are therefore under ministerial control and supervision.

The Ministry of Culture has established a system of dialog and contract management with most of the underlying institutions.

5 Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries

5.1 Introduction and general context

The Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries was established by the beginning of 1997 with the transfer of the National Food Agency and all government tasks related to nutritional and food legislation from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

The National Food Agency was merged with the Danish Veterinary Service to form the new institution, The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration. A principal aim of this re-structuring was to satisfy demands for food quality, safety and wholesomeness more effectively combining all links of the production chain.

This merger of institutions was accompanied by a shift in policy. Before the merger, the ministry was responsible for policy related to business. Now the ministry has the responsibility for policies connected to business and consumers.

This change has involved an increased focus on communication and information. The aim is to increase citizens' involvement and to create visibility concerning the policies of the ministry.

5.2 Evaluation and information

The following initiatives can be mentioned as examples of information and evaluation:

- Electronic communication with the public has been strengthened through the use of the Internet. All publications are published at the ministry’s homepage.

- With the aim of strengthening written communication with the citizens, guidelines for written communication have been established.
• A special information unit has been established in the department.

• Dialogue with citizens is emphasised as a goal.
6 Ministry of Social Affairs

6.1 Introduction and general context

Government-Citizen Connections in the area of social policy must be seen in the general context of the organisation of the social system. The municipalities and counties deliver most social benefits and services, and finance their tasks by local taxes and by reimbursement from the state.

Most laws in the area of social policy are framework laws. To a large degree this leaves it up to the individual municipality and county to decide which level of service they want to deliver; within the limits set by the national laws.

6.2 Legal and policy framework

Involvement/participation

There is a long tradition of involvement (consultation, information and participation) of user organisations when drafting bills in the social area as in most other policy areas in Denmark.

In 1997 the Parliament passed the Act on Legal Protection and Administration in Social Affairs (Lov om retssikkerhed og administration på det sociale område). The purpose of the law is to safeguard citizens' rights and citizens' influence as regards to handling social cases by authorities in municipalities and counties.

To a large degree the law is a continuation of existing regulation. It is the hope that by collecting the regulation in one law, and by underlining the importance of citizens' participation/involvement in the treatment of his or hers case, local authorities will involve citizens to a larger degree.

The EU

Proposals regarding new EU regulation are included in the ordinary national procedure for decision making in the area for social policy. Among other procedures, this includes a presentation of the proposal before the "special committee on the labour market and social matters" where the most important interest organisations are represented. (See section 9.4 for a general description of the "special committees" in the EU decision-making process in Denmark).

Access to information

In section 11.2 the duty of municipalities to publish information on the level of service etc. will be mentioned. This provision in the Local Government Act (Den Kommunale Styrelseslov) has special relevance in connection to the social area, since the explicit formulation of goals and economic frames can strengthen the level of information and thereby facilitate citizens' participation.

As regards home care it is established in the Act on Social Services (Serviceloven) that the individual municipality are obliged to set standards for service quality. Furthermore it is established that the recipient of home care must be informed in writing which services will be delivered as part of the home care.

In general individual action plans has become an integrated part of many social services in recent years.
Consultation and participation
User boards has been established in kindergartens, facilitating participation in decision making in each institution.

Every municipality must establish a Senior Citizens Council (Ældreåd). These councils must be consulted on local decisions with consequences for the elderly.

A number of councils representing users have been established at the national level. The purpose of these councils is to establish institutionalised frameworks for consultation with citizens and citizens participation. Especially it should be noted that the councils on their own initiative raise political issues.

The following councils can be mentioned:
• The National Council for Children (http://www.boerneraadet.dk/uk/index.htm)
• The Danish Disability Council
• The National Narcotics Council
• Age Forum
• The Contact Committee on Voluntary Social Work

6.3 Implementation tools and practises

There are no institutions etc. aimed especially at ensuring that the laws and practises mentioned in section 6.2 are actually implemented. The normal procedures for control and surveillance of the administration of the laws and provisions in the social area are used in this regard.

It should be noted that from 1997 and onwards the “jurisdiction” of the ombudsman have been enlarged to cover activities in the municipalities. This entails that the ombudsman today has a role in ensuring that the laws and practises mentioned in section 6.2 are actually implemented

6.4 Evaluating results

Evaluations of policies in the social area are regularly done with the purpose of getting information about the effectiveness and efficiency of policies and practises in social policy.

The purposes of the evaluations are:
• to assess the effect of social policy in the municipalities and counties
• to assess whether policies and their implementation fit the needs of the citizens
• to assess whether the intentions in the laws are implemented in the administrative practise of day to day administration
• to describe best practises
7 Ministry of Health

7.1 Introduction

Health care provision in Denmark is to a large extent a public task. 85% of health care costs are financed through taxes. The responsibility for running the services lies mainly with the regional authorities, but in fulfilling this task they work in close co-operation with the Government and the local authorities.

The Ministry of Health is the principal health authority in Denmark. As almost all health care services are provided at the regional and local administrative levels, the task of the Ministry of Health lies first and foremost in initiating, co-ordinating and advising.

This task includes the elaboration of laws on health provisions, personnel, hospitals and pharmacies, pharmaceuticals, foodstuffs, vaccination, pregnancy health care, child health care, patient rights etc. The legislative power lies with the Danish Parliament (the Folketing).

The legislation of the Ministry of Health covers the tasks of the regional and local authorities in the health area. The Ministry also sets up guidelines for the running of the health care services.

The Ministry is organised in three departments, which covers a total of 9 divisions

More information about the Ministry of Health can be found at the following address on the Internet http://www.sum.dk/uk/ukmenu.htm.

7.2 General context

As an established procedure organisations like the unions, the National Association of Local Authorities, the Association of County Councils, patient organisations etc. are consulted during preparation of bills before they are presented to Parliament.

During this process of consultation the organisations has the possibility of forwarding contributions to the formulation of the bill. Furthermore the citizens’ influence on policy formulation is enhanced though the extensive contact between citizens/organisations and politicians, including contact with the standing committees in Parliament.

The involvement of citizens in the decision making process through the described procedure of consultation is an established routine in the health sector.

In recent years there has been a tendency towards growth in the number of interested parties that seeks to be consulted in the policymaking process.

7.3 Legal and policy framework

In chapter 6a in the Law on Public Health Insurance, it is decided that the county councils, when preparing the county’s Health Plans are obliged to consult the following interested parties before making the final draft for the plan and presenting it for the county council:

- The municipal councils in the county
- The affected general practitioners
- The affected specialists
• Other affected practitioners

The purpose of this provision is to enhance openness and transparency in the process of making Health Plans. Especially the consultation with municipal councils is expected to enhance attention and local debate about the plan and its proposals concerning health services in the affected municipality.

By involving practitioners and other professionals in the primary health sector a holistic view on the health sector is strengthened.

In a departmental order (bekendtgørelse) from 1994 it is established that the county councils are obliged to set standards concerning the response time for ambulances in each geographic "ambulance area". The standards are published, and the county council controls if performance targets are met.

In the Law on Hospital Service (Lov om sygehusvæsenet) it is established that persons, who are going to receive a treatment at a hospital are to be informed about waiting times for the treatment at all public hospitals in the country. Furthermore, the coming patients are to be informed about how frequently the treatment is done at each hospital.

The purpose of this provision is to enhance the patients' use of the established right to choose which public hospital to be treated at. Information was in 1999 available for 24 diagnoses but more diagnoses will follow. Currently, such information is available (in Danish) on the Internet at the following address: http://www.info.sum.dk/.

The legal framework regarding planning and information mentioned in section 7.3 above could be seen as mechanisms which can facilitate consultation, information and participation.

In addition to this, several activities aimed at enhancing citizens involvement in health related issues can be mentioned:

• Campaigns are regularly carried through so as to make citizens take a stand on the issue of organ donations.
• Campaigns concerning smoking, sports and nutrition are regularly carried through so as to enable citizens to take an informed stand on how to live their lives in these respects.

7.4 Implementation tools and practises

The National Board of Health

Among other activities the purpose of the National Board of Health is to provide sound and balanced guidance and information to patients, relatives, health care decision-makers and staff and the citizens in general. Furthermore, it is the aim to increase general participation in the public debate on health issues through development projects and other initiatives.

More information on the National Board of Health can be found on the Internet at the following address: http://www.sst.dk/english/index.asp

The Danish Council of Ethic
The task of the Danish Council of Ethics is to provide the Parliament, official authorities and the public ongoing advice and information about ethical problems raised by developments within the national health service and the field of biomedicine. This is accomplished by submitting reports and statements etc. in specified areas and by creating debate, generating activities in the form of e.g. public enquiries and debate days, publishing debate books, anthologies, videos and teaching material, and extensive lecturing activities. In addition the Council gives a rundown of its activities every year in an annual report.

More information on The Danish Council of Ethics can be found on the Internet at the following address: http://www.etiskraad.dk/english/english.htm

Two councils on prevention

In regards to prevention two councils have been established: The Danish Council on Smoking and Health and the Council on Health Promotion Policy

The Council on Health Promotion Policy monitors developments in the health sector as well as other social sectors. Furthermore, the council supervises and assesses public sector preventive efforts and submits proposals for preventive initiatives. The Council is autonomous and consists of 7 members, representing different scientific professions.

The Danish Council on Smoking and Health is appointed by the Danish Minister of Health in accordance with an act originally from 1987. The Council is autonomous and consists of 7 members, representing different scientific professions.

The overall objectives for the Council are to reduce the number of active smokers as much as possible and to prevent involuntary exposure to passive smoking. In order to achieve the overall objectives the Council has set up following sub-objectives:

- Prevent that embryos, babies and children are exposed to tobacco smoke,
- Prevent recruitment of new smokers especially among children and youngsters,
- Establish smoke-free environments in order to prevent involuntary smoking,
- Motivate and help smokers to quit.

Most smoking prevention activities in Denmark are carried out in a close co-operation with The Danish Cancer Society, The Danish Heart Foundation and The Danish Lung Association which are the most important non-governmental organisations working with respect to tobacco and health. This co-operation means a very high reinforcement of the informative activities in Denmark.

More information on Danish Council on Smoking and Health can be found on the Internet at the following address http://www.tobaksskaderaadet.dk
8 Ministry of Transport

8.1 Introduction and general context

The Minister of Transport has the task of endeavouring to implement the Government’s policy within the area of the Ministry of Transport, including drafting the required legislation, etc.

The underlying institutions, executive agencies, corporations, councils and boards carry out the daily administration and handling of tasks and assignments.

In 1999 the State owned shares in SAS Denmark A/S (50 per cent), Copenhagen Airports Plc (approximately 50 per cent) and the Private Railways (on average approximately 50 per cent of each). The State was sole owner of Sound and Belt Holding A/S, which owns Great Belt A/S and Oresound A/S, and owned 50 per cent of the equity in Oresoundskonsortiet, COMBUS A/S, and Scandlines A/S.

The Ministry of Transport manages the State’s ownership interest in these companies.

Finally, the Ministry of Transport manages the State’s ownership interest in Post Denmark, which has been set up as a special public corporation, but otherwise generally operates under the same rules as listed limited liability companies.

The Ministry is the Minister’s secretariat and assists the Minister with the governance and management of the Ministerial area, including ordinary secretarial tasks, strategic planning and policy formulation, as well as drafting laws, orders etc. with a view to implementing the Government’s policy in the Minister’s area.

The Ministry of Transport has 170 staff, distributed on the Minister’s secretariat and a total of five sections and twelve divisions.

More information about the Ministry of Transport can be found at the following address on the Internet http://www.trm.dk/eng/index.html

8.2 Legal and policy framework

The Humlemose Committee
For some years it has been a recognised problem that citizens affected directly or indirectly by large public construction works have not been sufficiently informed about the projects.

On this background a committee was established in 1997 to analyse how information, consultation and participation could be increased so as to enhance the welfare of citizens affected by major public construction works. Especially the focus was on people affected by compulsory purchase/expropriation.

The committees report was published in 1998, and in April 1999 a new law was passed by the Parliament following the recommendations in the report.

Among other things the law makes consultation/public hearings on bills on road and railway construction works compulsory. The Ministry of Transport is responsible for implementing the law
through guidelines. The guidelines will be binding for the Road Directorate and the Danish National Railway Agency.

8.3 Implementation tools and practises

Information
Generally, citizens are consulted prior to presentation of bills to Parliament and in connection to the drafting of new administrative guidelines.

Normally bills etc. are send to affected organisations, relevant authorities, business, citizens’ associations etc.

The Ministry of Transport’s contacts to the citizens takes several forms:

- Press releases
- Postal distribution of information
- Pamphlets
- TV spots
- Possibility of subscription to electronic news from the ministry
- Possibility of meetings between citizens and the minister
9 Ministry of Foreign Affairs

9.1 Introduction

Information about the Ministry of Foreign Affairs can be found at the following address on the Internet http://www.um.dk/english/.

9.2 General context

Several factors motivate the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to seek in-depth and thorough involvement by the citizens in the Ministry’s areas of work.

- Non-governmental organisations, unions and pressure groups represent a large part of the Danish resource-base, and the know-how and knowledge from the above are considered an important supplement to the Ministry’s own analytical and information gathering capacity.

- The Ministry’s connections with the citizens reinforce the legitimacy of political decisions and facilitate the implementation of policies, projects and laws.

- The citizens’ awareness of their possibility to influence the policy and decision making processes further promotes the citizens participation in the public debate in Denmark.

The main factor limiting citizen involvement in the Ministry’s affairs is time. Extensive hearing procedures and meetings would at some point cripple the Ministry’s ability to make the right decisions in time. Within the area of security policy, issues dealt with often are of a nature not suitable for public debate (cf. section 9.3 below).

9.3 Legal and policy framework

Denmark has a long tradition for involving citizens in the governmental decision making process. This goes hand in hand with the Scandinavian Welfare State Model.

In general, the established connections between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the citizens are not a consequence of specific laws directed specifically at this purpose. Openness, information-sharing and dialogue with the citizens have evolved primarily guided by the above mentioned factors (cf. section 9.2 above).

In matters concerning security policy specific procedures prevail between the Government and the Folketing (Parliament). According to §19 of the Constitution the Government is to take advice from the Committee of Foreign Affairs in the Folketing before major decisions in the area of foreign policy are made. The work of the Committee is constituted by law.

Matters debated in the Committee of Foreign Affairs are confidential, and citizens are usually not included in the debate of issues concerning security policy. According to the Constitution it is the prerogative of the Government to decide the foreign policy of the country, and many topics, e.g. concerning security policy, are not suitable for public debate or may damage Danish interests.
Hence, the interest of the citizens in security policy matters is primarily looked after by the Government and in certain important matters by the Government as well as by elected political representatives in the Folketing.

9.4 Implementation tools and practises
Groups, agencies and boards, which promote the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ connections with the citizens, are given below.

Danish Advisory Council on European Affairs
The idea to establish a Danish Advisory Council on European Affairs was conceived in the spring of 1993 as a result of the Danish Referendum on the Maastricht-Treaty and the subsequent decisions in Edinburgh. The basis was a proposal in a report from March 1993 by the European Affairs Committee of the Danish Parliament to establish a Council on matters relating to the European Union, with a broad membership comprising organisations, grassroot movements and individual personalities. As permanent members should be appointed members of the Folketing’s European Affairs Committee, The Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.

The Advisory Council on European Affairs was established by the Government in October 1993 for four years to serve as a forum for debate and advise concerning the general European aspects of problems relating to policies in the European Union. In 1997 the mandate for the Advisory Council was extended to 2001.

In 1999 the Advisory Council consisted of approximately 200 members with different backgrounds. Members represent a broad spectrum of views on how relations should be between Denmark and The European Union, reaching from support to a sceptic attitude.

Since 1993 the Advisory Council has held many meetings on a regular basis and has arranged many conferences, seminars and similar events.

The Advisory Council has made a considerable contribution to promoting active citizen participation in the public debate in Denmark and the views expressed have been taken into consideration in the Danish political decision making process in regards to matters relating to European affairs.

Special committees in the EU decision-making process
The involvement of the citizens in Denmark’s EU decision-making process is first and foremost realised through the participation in so-called special committees of which there are 31 in various specific areas, e.g. trade policy, agriculture or environment. The special committee permanent members are civil servants from ministries and governmental boards. Interest groups with substantial EU interests may also obtain permanent affiliation to, or possibly membership of a special committee. Furthermore, the chairman of a special committee may invite interest groups to participate on an ad hoc basis to attend the committee’s discussions of a concrete case. Generally, interest groups are routinely drawn into consultation procedures concerning concrete Commission proposals, thereby making it possible for the interest groups to voice their views at a sufficiently early stage in the decision-making process.

The “Beach Club” process.
Following the second WTO Ministerial Conference in May 1998 the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs took initiative to establish a special consultative procedure in order to secure in-depth
preparation of Danish positions on all trade policy matters prior to an up-coming new round of
global trade negotiations. This initiative would be named “Beach Club” after the place (the
United Nations “Beach Club” restaurant in Geneva) where it was originally launched and intro-
duced to a number of Danish government institutions, organisations and NGO’s involved in trade
politics.

The “Beach Club” process is organised around a “Beach Club” Committee that functions as a
forum for the exchange of information on trade policy matters, and where informal discussions of
new initiatives and proposals in the trade policy field can take place. The “Beach Club” Com-
mittee has no decision-making powers entrusted to it, but refers all decisions (and policy formu-
lation) to a standing committee on international trade preparing for the Government’s position on
trade policy issues.

All interested parties are invited to become members of the “Beach Club” Committee, which has
about 50 members. There are representatives from Danish ministries and agencies (in the field of
trade and industry, environment, agriculture and food stuff, economics and finance, competition
etc.) Further a number of interest groups are represented in the Committee (trade and business
organisations, labour organisations, organisations representing small and medium sized busi-
nesses as well as importers, the maritime industry etc.). Two independent coalitions represent a
vast number of NGO’s in the Committee covering primarily the developmental and environmental
aspects of trade politics.

Referring to the Committee, sixteen working groups have been established with the objective to
analyse all trade policy issues of relevance to up-coming trade negotiations and accordingly to
put forward recommendations for Danish positions on international trade.

Members of the “Beach Club” Committee as well as a vast number of other interested parties
involved in international trade are represented in the working groups. Each working group has a
membership of 10-15 people and are chaired by a ministry or agency responsible for trade politics
in that particular area. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is represented in all the groups being the
ministry in Denmark in charge of overall trade policy issues.

Board for International Development Co-operation

By law a Board for International Development Co-operation was established in 1962. All major
policy papers and strategies for co-operation with individual developing countries as well as spe-
cific programmes and projects are discussed by the Board. Members of the Board are appointed
by the Minister for Development Co-operation in their personal capacity but are selected to repre-
sent all major institutions and organisations in Danish society that take an interest in development
issues (business, trade unions, agriculture, research, NGO’s and others). A larger Council for
International Development Co-operation, with 75 members based in a broad range of organisa-
tions, serves as an advisory body to the Board.

Additionally, a number of Danish non-government organisations (NGO’s) are actively involved
in the implementation of programmes and projects in developing countries in Africa, Asia and
Central and Latin America. Within the last couple of years an increasing number of Private Sec-
tor Programmes have also been established in some of the 20 programme countries where the
Danish development co-operation is focused. Among other things such programmes strengthen
the involvement of the Danish business sector in the official development policy. Representatives
from various interests in the society are valuable partners in the efforts of the Danish government
to secure a sustainable development in the Third World.
NGO Contact Committee for Development Cooperation

In 1993 the Minister for Development Cooperation established the NGO Contact Committee, with the purpose of strengthening the dialogue between Danida and the NGO’s. The Committee consists of representatives from 14 Danish NGO’s – or associations of NGO’s. The Minister for Development Cooperation is chairman of the committee and appoints the 14 NGO-representatives. These constitute a broad segment of the Danish NGO-environment ranging from the largest NGO’s to associations representing the smaller NGO’s. The committee usually meets twice a year, but, from time to time, the committee meets extraordinarily. The committee functions as an informal forum of discussion of development assistance topics. The agenda is determined in consultation with the NGO’s.

Danish development assistance is characterised by the significant role assigned to Danish NGO’s. More than 15% of the Danish official bilateral development assistance is channelled through Danish NGO’s. The spectrum of NGO’s receiving support from Danida ranges from the small friendship society carrying out single projects in its adopted country to large organisations with a broad constituency implementing large-scale development programmes in a number of recipient countries. It is a criteria that the NGO, receiving funds from Danida, has adequate popular foundation in the Danish society, among other thing has at least 50 members.

The involvement of NGO’s in the implementation of the official Danish development assistance is based, among other things, on the assumption that the NGO’s are particularly qualified to strengthen the popular foundation of the development assistance. The Danish NGO’s participate actively in and contribute to the national debate on development matters, hence they contribute to a constantly development of the Danish development assistance.

The Danish NGO’s contribute to the preparation of the Danish policy-papers concerning development assistance, in the yearly discussions of the development of the main sectors where Danida is working and the NGO’s are invited to participate in meetings/conferences about specific issues.

The NGO Contact Group on Human Rights.

In 1995 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs established an NGO contact group in order to intensify and systematise contact with NGO’s in the field of human rights.

Approximately 60 organisations participate in the contact group which meets 3 or 4 times a year – in particular around the annual sessions of the UN Human Rights Commission – in order to exchange information and points of view on human rights policy with human rights officials of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and occasionally the Minister for Foreign Affairs. During the 6 weeks session of the Human Rights Commission weekly briefings are held in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs for the NGO’s.

Human Rights documentation of a general nature, e.g. Danish country reports to human rights treaty bodies, is distributed regularly to the NGO’s participating in the contact group.

Representatives of the NGO’s are included in the Government delegation to the Human Rights Commission. They are full members of the delegation and act under instruction from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

The contact group is set up by an administrative decision and does not rest on a specific legal foundation.
The contact group supplements but in no way replaces direct contacts with NGO’s on specific issues. It provides a useful forum for a general exchange of views and enhances possibilities to draw upon the extensive experience of the NGO’s.

**Foreign Ministry Advisory Group on the Human Dimension of the OSCE**

Within the field of Danish participation in the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) the first meeting within the human dimension in 1985 led to the setting-up of the Foreign Ministry Advisory Group on the Human Dimension of the OSCE. The Advisory Group now comprises 17 non-governmental organisations, mainly major country-wide organisations (cf. enclosed list of the membership).

From the beginning the Advisory Group has formed the framework for a continuous dialogue on human dimension issues. The focal point of this dialogue has been the discussion and elaboration of Danish attitudes as part of the preparations for our participation in OSCE meetings, most often within the human dimension. Over the years ideas and suggestions from the Advisory Group have contributed significantly to the shaping of Danish policies in this area. With the increasing integration of the human dimension into the efforts of the OSCE for conflict prevention the dialogue within the Advisory Group has gradually broadened to comprise relevant topics in this field.

The Advisory Group usually meets two or three times a year at irregular intervals based on the need for discussing current topics. During the Danish Chairmanship of the OSCE in 1997 the frequency of the meetings was increased considerably.

Both as a consequence of our general approach to NGO involvement in the work of the OSCE and as a result of the experiences gained in the course of the work of the Advisory Group Denmark has since 1990 included representatives of non-governmental organizations, usually members of the Advisory Group, in the Danish delegations to OSCE meetings on human dimension issues.

**Information and communication tools**

In the field of development assistance, Denmark has a long standing tradition of involving NGO's to provide information on development issues. The object is to generate and enhance understanding of the significance of Denmark's participation in international development work and Danish development cooperation. The target group is the Danish population and the information must give an account of the economic, social, political and cultural conditions of developing countries and their relations with industrialized countries. Support is provided to associations, organizations, institutions, schools and the mass media through an information grant administered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. By using the NGO's and their large networks the government ensures that the information reaches a very broad audience in all parts of the country. In addition to this program, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also runs its own information program which complements the work of the NGO's.

In other areas of Danish foreign policy such as the EU, NATO, international trade etc. the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has in recent years started a public information program which among other things includes a series of booklets under the main title MFA: Issues in Focus. The series is distributed widely over the country using the public library system, educational institutions etc.

Furthermore the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on behalf of the Danish Government, produced a series of booklets prior to the Danish referendum on the Amsterdam Treaty. The series of 9 booklets provided information to the citizens covering a variety of issues, including the environment, employment, common foreign and security policy and the EU enlargement process.
In all its work aimed at strengthening government-citizens connections, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs relies heavily on the new information technology. A second generation home page on the Internet is being developed now, and according to Danish legislation all written information published by the ministry must also be incorporated in the ministry’s home page. Thus the Internet in many ways will be the cornerstone of the ministry’s relations with the citizens of Denmark in the future, underscoring the importance the ministry attaches to a dialogue on foreign policy issues based on the principle of openness in its information policy.

9.5 Evaluation and information

In the field of development assistance, much importance is given to evaluation of Danish programmes and projects, including NGO activities financed by the government. These efforts serve the dual purpose of securing an effective use of taxpayers’ money and improving future activities based on knowledge gathered within the administration (MFA) from previous projects. Determination of which activities will come under scrutiny lies with an individual unit within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reporting directly to the State Secretary for Development Co-operation while actual evaluation is carried out by interdisciplinary teams of external consultants and experts - i.e. private individuals and companies. In a 1999 DAC evaluation the methods and functioning of the Danish Evaluation Unit itself was given excellent appraisal.
10 Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

10.1 Introduction

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs deals with housing, urban, and building affairs. The ministry administers the legislation concerning the integrated urban regeneration, the building sector and the housing sector and coordinates the integrated urban policy. The ministry also facilitates research necessary for planning in the area of housing, urban, and building affairs.

Furthermore, the ministry has the responsibility for the administration of the premises of the central administration at the national government level and the up-keep of the royal castles and gardens.

The ministry also has the responsibility for activities connected to charting land and sea and for land registry. Furthermore, the ministry has the responsibility regarding regulations, control and approval in the areas of electricity and gas.

Finally the minister for Housing and Urban Affairs has been granted the responsibility for activities related to the facilitation of equal rights for men and woman.

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs includes the following institutions: The department (http://www.bm.dk), the Danish Governmental Gas Institute (http://www.dgp.dk), the Electricity Council (http://www.elraadet.dk), National Survey and Cadastre (http://www.ses.dk), Cadastre Denmark (http://www.kms.dk/index_en.html), the Palaces and Properties Agency, the Danish Building Research Institute (http://www.sbi.dk/English/English.htm), and the Equal Status Council (http://www.lige.dk/uk/ukframeset.htm)

10.2 General context

It is a formulated goal in the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs to enhance effectiveness through citizens’ involvement in policy formulation and implementation.

In recent years new action plans have been formulated within many of the areas for which the ministry is responsible. These action plans have been formulated in close co-operation with interest organisations connected to the relevant policy areas, as for example the National Association of Local Authorities in Denmark, Byfornyelsesselskabet Danmark (Urban Renewal Denmark) and the Federation of Non-profit Housing in Denmark.

10.3 Legal and policy framework

As a principal rule, legislation, regulations, guidelines etc. are forwarded to interested parties for consultation before enactment by the Danish Parliament or otherwise. Typically the interested parties are consulted via conferences, meetings, user panels and/or written consultation.

In the paragraphs below some examples are given of how this principal rule has been implemented in concrete policy areas.

*The Urban Perspective and Action Plan*
In the Spring of 1999 the Ministry launched an Urban Perspective and Action Plan. Urban Politics and decisions concern the citizens. Therefore, citizens as well as interest groups were involved in the formulation of the action plan, and they are involved in the implementation too.

An urban regeneration experiment which focuses on resident participation
The National Secretariat for Urban Regeneration which is part of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs co-ordinate an experiment which focuses on citizens participation in urban regeneration.

Seven urban areas are participating in an extensive urban regeneration experiment. The purpose is partly to improve the individual residential areas as a whole and partly to provide models for urban policy in the future. The projects are based on local forces. The view taken is that the local residents themselves are in the best position to identify the main local problems and ways of solving them, and that involving the residents result in better solutions and strengthens the residents' feeling of community. Important in the process is also the dialogue between residents and experts.

One important aim with these projects is to gain experience in good learning processes, particularly concerning involvement of the residents, and thus develop new, untraditional forms of organisation and new forms of cooperation between private and public activities.

The Law on Integrated Urban Regeneration
The first Law on Integrated Urban Regeneration was enacted in 1997. Before presenting the bill to parliament a discussion paper, Urban Regeneration 96, was published. The purpose of this was to involve all interested parties, including citizens, organisations etc. in a discussion on the contents of the bill.

In addition to the discussion paper conferences and hearings were held and several reports were presented to the Danish Parliament.

Interest organisations and relevant authorities were consulted on early drafts for the bill.

The bill was enacted by parliament in 1997 but has been subject to several changes since then. Proposals for these changes have been published on the ministry's homepage together with an invitation for citizens to forward comments.

Alternative housing for social excluded persons
In 1999 an initiative was launched to create "alternative housing to social excluded people". The guidelines for the initiative were drafted on the basis of meetings with representatives from interest organisations and public authorities and on the basis of a public conference.

Amendment to regulations on housing construction etc.
In connection to a change in the general building regulation in 1999 226 organisations etc. were consulted. In connection with a change in 1999 in the regulation of small houses 341 interested parties were consulted.

Access to buildings
In 1997 an action plan concerning access for physically disabled to buildings was published. The action plan was based on a report prepared by a committee of officials in close co-operation with organisations representing disabled citizens.

Among other initiatives taken by the committee an ad hoc panel of users was set up to provide inspiration and comments on proposals from the committee before the final version of the report was published. The panel proved to be a valuable source of inspiration and information on the users’ preferences.

**Intensified use of construction sector expertise**

As a research and development deficit prevails within the Danish construction sector and as the sector is characterised by a certain reluctance to utilising acknowledged research results and experience, a special section of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs’ April 1998 Building Policy Action Programme is dedicated to the research and exploitation of expertise within the construction industry. Based on recent reports on the sector’s use of construction expertise the Ministry has appointed a working group with the participation of construction industry businesses and promoters of relevant know-how with the task of preparing an action plan on how to establish increased co-operation on intensified use of construction sector expertise.

**Information**

All bills are published on the Ministry's homepage before being presented to debate in parliament. Visitors are encouraged to comment on the bills.

Summary reports from public conferences are published on the homepage.

**Promotion of citizens’ consultation and participation**

From one point of view activities based on the Act on Urban Renewal can be seen as implementation. From another point of view, substantial decisions affecting citizens’ lives are involved in such activities.

According to the Act on Urban Renewal active consultation and participation among affected parties, especially residents in the area, must be a part of urban renewal projects.

**Support of the use of new information technologies**

Increased use of information technology in the construction process generally provides an important tool for improving construction sector efficiency and limiting time spent on construction projects.

10.4 **Implementation tools and practises**

The ministry has a special division devoted to enhancing the quality of information from the Ministry to the public. The work regarding communication is formulated in a communication strategy.

Co-ordination is mainly achieved through ad hoc meetings between representatives of the Ministry of Urban and Housing Affairs and representatives of state authorities, municipalities and counties.
In general, citizens and organised interested parties are consulted and informed in connection with the formulation of policies. Citizens also play an important part in the implementation phase.

10.5 Evaluation and information

Since strengthening government-citizens connections is an integrated part of most initiatives regarding housing and urban renewal policies, evaluation of government-citizens connections is an integrated part of normal policy evaluations.

A growing number of enquiries from citizens are forwarded to the ministry by e-mail. This constitutes a major service improvement and has increased the number of enquiries.

The completed Project Renovation as well as the launched Project Housebuilding both encompass evaluation schemes, including the evaluation of information, citizen consultation and active participation. Generally speaking, however, the number and the contents of construction sector manifestations and the sector’s promptitude in contributing to the implementation of the above mentioned Building Policy Action Programme clearly indicate that information, citizen consultation and active participation appear to have been addressed satisfactorily.

With the exception of a measurement of the Ministry's relations with a selection of journalists and the projects mentioned above there has until now not been any evaluation of initiatives regarding dialogue with the citizens.
11 The ministry of the Interior

11.1 Introduction

The Ministry of the Interior has a varied field of responsibility. The ministry has the responsibility for laws regarding the organisation of the municipalities; supervision of the municipalities; the economy of the counties and the municipalities; elections for Parliament, the municipality councils, the county councils, referenda etc.; immigrants and refugees; emergency management; administration of the compulsory military service; administration of the civil registration number system; and the activities in the state counties.

The Ministry of the Interior had in 1999 approximately 2,100 employees allocated between one central department, two agencies (the Danish Immigration Service and the Emergency Management Agency) and 29 regional institutions (15 state counties and 14 regional sections of the Emergency Management Agency).

11.2 Legal and policy framework

General information and the preparation of bills

In connection with drafting of bills interested parties and NGO’s are consulted. Through this procedure the interested parties are given the opportunity to comment on the bills and to gain influence on the wording of the bills. For example Amnesty International, The Danish Refugee Council and Danish Red Cross are typically consulted on bills regarding immigrants and refugees.

To encourage public awareness and interest and to fully inform the press, all press releases, acts, guidelines, regulations etc. are readily available on the homepage of the Ministry (www.inm.dk).

Immigrants and refugees

Pursuant to the Act on Integration of Aliens in Denmark (the Integration Act) from 1998 a municipality must set up an Integration Council if more than 50 citizens above the age of 18 request therefore in a joint written request.

The Integration Council can give advisory opinions on the general effort of integration in the municipality and on specific introduction programmes and initiatives for aliens offered by the municipality council.

The local authority appoints the members of the Integration Council among the members of local refugee and immigrant associations or among corresponding citizens in the municipality. Furthermore members are appointed among persons associated with the labour market, local primary school boards and other local associations in the municipality.

Furthermore the Integration Act states that the Minister of the Interior must establish a national committee of representatives consisting of the members of the local Integration Councils representing the ethnic minorities. This committee of representatives elects the Council of Ethnic Minorities. The Council advises the Minister of the Interior on issues of importance to refugees and immigrants. The Council cannot submit opinions on individual cases.

The Integration Act thus provides a consultative and participatory mechanism for ethnic minorities at the local level as well as at the national level.
Public access to meetings in the municipalities

Citizens’ access to information about the activities of the municipality and county councils is an important precondition for the citizens’ active participation in the public debate regarding matters dealt with by municipalities and counties. Thereby, information about the activities of the municipality and county councils is a precondition for citizens’ influence on local decision making.

The Local Government Act – that applies for both municipalities and counties – sets up regulations regarding the organisation of the municipal and county councils. Therefore the following description of the regulation concerning the municipal councils also applies for the county councils.

According to the Local Government Act the meetings in the municipality council are open to the public. This is called the Principle Rule of Openness. However, the municipality council can decide that matters is to be transacted in confidence if required on account of its nature, for example discussions that include citizens private matters.

The Principal Rule of Openness also entails that considerations in the municipality council can be reported in the press. Furthermore, the municipality councils are obliged to publish a plan in the beginning of each year regarding the ordinary meetings in the municipality council in the following 12 months. The plan is to be published in the local press.

The Local Government Act also states that a list of business to be transacted at the meeting of the municipal council and a transcript of the resolution minutes shall be open for inspection at one or more addresses in the local area. This obligation is subject to the restrictions as to secrecy provided by law.

Obligation to inform citizens

§ 62 of the Local Government Act states that the municipality council shall account to the residents of the local area for the contents and the extent of the major public services offered or intended to be offered to the residents of the local area. The statement is required to include information about the goals which the municipality council has identified for the development in the respective areas. The statement shall be rendered at least every second year.”

At least every second year the municipality council shall account to the residents of the local area for operations which are carried out by others than the local government according to tender. The statement shall include information about when the operations were put to tender, whether the operations are undertaken by other local governments, other public authorities or private enterprises and whether the local government itself has tendered for the execution of the operation. Furthermore, the statement must include an appraisal of the performance of the operation.

At least every second year the municipal council shall account to the residents of the local area for the situation with regard to equal opportunities for men and women employed by the local government. The statement shall include information regarding:

- whether the local government has conceived an equal opportunity policy and its contents in detail,

- the sex distribution within individual job classifications and
- other matters deemed to be of significance to the assessment of the efforts of the local government in the equal opportunity area.

Finally, a short summary of the contents of the annual budget and the budget estimates is to be distributed to the residents of the local area or be inserted in the local press as determined by the municipal council before commencement of the next fiscal year.

**Neighbourhood committees**

In the Local Government Act the municipalities are given the authority to establish Neighbourhood Committees which can be granted authority to make certain decisions. The municipality council chooses the members of the Neighbourhood Committees. Ordinary citizens can be chosen to have a seat in the Neighbourhood Committee. The municipality council can decide that observers must participate in the meetings in the Neighbourhood Councils. The observers are chosen either among the members of the municipality council or among local organisations, clubs etc.

The purpose of establishing Neighbourhood Committees is to strengthen citizens interests and possibility for exercising influence on local issues and decisions.

**Select committees**

The municipality council can establish select committees with advisory or preparatory functions in connection to the standing committees in the municipalities. The members of these select committees can be chosen among citizens that are not members of the municipality council, for example among representatives of user groups.

**User boards**

A number of laws establish that the municipality council must establish user boards in a range of service delivering institutions. The purpose of establishing the user boards is to strengthen democracy, to ensure that services are delivered in a way adjusted to local needs and to increase citizens awareness of resource limitations. Most user boards are found within the areas of social services and education, including for example kindergartens, primary schools and high schools.

**Other initiatives on information and consultation in the municipalities and counties**

Many municipalities arrange public meetings from time to time regarding decisions and issues related to the municipality. Most municipalities arrange such meetings about the yearly budget. Although many such meetings are held, no laws or other guidelines regulate the activities at such meetings.

The municipality boards can decide to arrange questioning hours where citizens can discuss political issues with the members of the municipality council. Normally such questioning hours are held before or after meetings in the municipality council. There are no laws regulating such meetings and members of the municipality council have no obligation to participate in the meetings.

The municipality councils can decide to hold a referendum among the citizens in the municipality before a matter is decided upon by the municipality council. Such referenda can only be advisory. The decision to hold a referendum can be taken by a majority in the municipality council, whereas neither voters nor a minority in the municipality council can demand a referendum to be held.
The possibility to hold such referenda is infrequently used. Since 1977 only 8 such municipal referenda has been held.

11.3 Implementation tools and practices

Immigrants and refugees (the Danish Immigration Service)
The Danish Immigration Service places great emphasis on making information accessible to everyone whether for personal use in a pending case or for the purpose of participating in the public debate in order to influence the political decision-making process.

Acts, regulations etc. regarding residence permits and visas as well as a presentation of the Danish Immigration Service and its areas of responsibility are available on the homepage www.udlst.dk. An electronic version of pamphlets, fact-finding reports and newsletters about aliens in Denmark are also available on this homepage.

In addition to this a Yearbook from the Danish Immigration Service is published. This Yearbook contains a presentation of the current development in asylum and immigration policies including a catalogue of the acts in this area which have been adopted during the past year. The Yearbook also informs the reader about international treaties signed by Denmark and other international matters concerning immigration and refugee policies.

At the reception of the Danish Immigration Service in Copenhagen a “PC-café” has been established. This enables visitors to find general information about refugee and immigration matters, such as conditions for obtaining a residence permit in Denmark.

In 1995 the Danish Immigration Service has established a debate and information forum. The forum consists of representatives of organisations and authorities affected by the administration of the immigration and refugee policies of the Danish Immigration Service. The purpose of the forum is to create an informal forum for discussion and information as a supplement to the formal procedures.

Supervision of the municipalities and counties
The 14 supervisory boards overlook that municipalities keep the laws and legal principles regulating their activities. The Ministry of the Interior supervises the supervisory boards, the counties and the municipality of Frederiksberg and the City of Copenhagen.

The appropriate local council may appeal against the decisions of the supervisory boards to the Ministry of the Interior.

Among other things the supervisory boards and the Ministry of the Interior are obliged to supervise that the regulations mentioned above in regard to information, access, participation and consultation are kept.
12 Ministry of Taxation

12.1 Introduction and general context

In general, citizens’ direct involvement in decision making within the area of the Ministry of Taxation is limited. However, proximity to taxpayers has always been a priority in tax administration. The collection of taxes is largely done by the municipalities in co-operation with the 29 Customs and Tax Regions.

12.2 Legal and policy framework

According to § 42 in the Constitution Parliament it is not allowed to hold referenda on proposals regarding taxes and duties.

Otherwise, the law making process follows the procedure described above.

12.3 Information and evaluation

As a new initiative it was stated in the laws enacting a range of green taxes in 1995 that the Ministry of Taxation in co-operation with other ministries should evaluate the laws in 1999. This evaluation has been carried out with the involvement of businesses affected. The Ministry of Taxation sees this as a mechanism for consultation with the citizens.

The Ministry of Taxation uses the Internet strategically to enhance information about taxation.

Since 1994 the ministry has conducted a campaign aimed at the highest classes in primary school. The purpose of the campaign is to illustrate the connection between the payment of taxes and the security offered by society in return. The aim is to raise generations of good taxpayers through education and information.

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2 More information in English about referenda in Denmark can be found on the the Parliaments homepage at the following address: www.folketinget.dk.
13 The Ministry of Environment and Energy

13.1 Introduction

The Ministry of Environment and Energy is in charge of administrative and research tasks in the area of environmental protection, energy and planning. The Ministry of Environment and Energy manages administration at state level. At regional and local level, much of the administrative responsibility has been delegated to local governments in counties and municipalities.

The Department serves the Minister for Environment and Energy. The Department has the overall responsibility for the personnel and budgetary affairs of the Ministry. The Spatial Planning Department is part of the Department.

The division of labour between the Department and the three agencies means that the agencies process specific cases, which are then presented to the Minister for Environment and Energy. The cases are presented through the Minister’s Secretariat, which prepares decisions and assists in setting priorities for and managing the overall work of the Minister. In addition, the Minister’s Secretariat assists the Minister in contact with the Parliament, the mass media and the public.

The Department handles the budgetary affairs of the Ministry and organisational and personnel policies. The Department also co-ordinates the internal environmental policies of the Ministry except for the EU policies which are being co-ordinated by the Danish EPA. This ensures environmentally sound policies in the daily operations of the Ministry.

The Department also manages an Information Centre (Miljøbutikken) described in section 13.4 below.

More information about the Ministry of Environment and Energy can be found at the following address on the Internet:

13.2 General context

Most of the initiatives regarding consultation, information and public participation in environmental matters are being described and evaluated in the light of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental matters (The Aarhus Convention). This is due to the fact that the Convention was implemented in Danish legislation during 1999.

The Aarhus Convention was adopted at the fourth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" in Aarhus, Denmark, on 25 June 1998. Thirty-nine countries and the European Community have since signed it.

More information about the conference can be found at the following address http://www.mem.dk/aarhus-conference/.

13.3 Legal and policy framework

The legal framework being described and assessed in connection with the implementation process consists of a number of laws. Some of the relevant ones will be presented in the following.
Generally there is widespread tradition of public participation in preparing regulation in The Ministry of Environment and Energy. This can e.g. be seen in the regular procedures followed by the agencies of the ministry in the process of preparing new bills etc., which include among other things communication with relevant parties, NGO’s etc.

**Access to environmental information (Lov om aktindsigt i miljøoplysninger)**

The Law on Right of Access to Information Related to Environmental Issues supplements the Access to Public Administration Files Act and the Public Administration Act as it implements the EF-directive 90/313/EØF regarding free access to information related to Environmental Issues.

The Law on Right of Access to Information Related to Environmental Issues gives "everybody" access to documents related to environmental issues. No difference is made between Danish citizens and foreigners, and no discrimination is made on the basis of where the person demanding access lives.

This right concerns information from all public institutions and information from other public entities evolved in activities with consequences for the environment, provided that the entities are controlled by public institutions.

Information related to the following areas are encompassed by the law: “Information relating to the environment” shall mean any available information in written, visual, aural or database form on the state of the water, air, soil, flora, land and natural sites, and on activities (including those which give rise to nuisances such as noise) or measures adversely affecting, or likely to affect these, including administrative measures and environmental management programmes.

The law regards all information available in written, visual, audible or electronic form no matter when the information is acquired by the authority.

The institution or complaint commission that is the usual authority for complaints in the area in question is also the authority to which complaints about decisions concerning access to information according to the Law on Right of Access to Information Related to Environmental Issues can be forwarded.

As regards payment for access to information granted with reference to The Law on Right of Access to Information Related to Environmental Issues the principles in the Access to Public Administration Files Act are followed.

**Collection and dissemination of environmental information**

A range of laws states that institutions under the Ministry of Environment and Energy are obliged to collect environmental information. Furthermore, a range of laws oblige companies to report environmental information.

In regard to dissemination of environmental information the Ministry of Environment and Energy has issued several guidelines and instructions concerning the use of the right to access to environmental information. Furthermore, the ministry has opened an Information Centre described in section 13.4 below.

**Public participation in decisions on specific activities - The Law on Physical Planning**
According to the Law on Physical Planning (Planloven) and connected official guideline, a specific procedure must be followed when an application are forwarded concerning of project with a land location for which an assessment of the effects on the environment is required according to that law.

When an assessment of the effects on the environment is required according to the Law on Physical Planning, an addition to the regional plan has to be enacted if the project is approved by the relevant authority.

These projects are in accordance with the EU directive (97/11/EF) projects that are likely to have a significant impact on the environment.

If the authority responsible for deciding whether assessments of the effects on the environment are to be made decides in favour of this, the authority is required to publish/announce this decision in local newspapers. In this announcement the main questions in connection to the project are to be published as are a deadline for comments, proposals and objections from the public.

After this period of consultation, the relevant authority draws up a change to the regional plan concerning the placement and specific working out of the project.

This addition to the regional plan is then published and the public is given 8 weeks to object to the revised plan. Information about the regional plan is published in local newspapers, informing about

- the content of the decision and the conditions connected to it,
- the most significant justifications for and considerations behind the decision,
- if necessary, a description of the most important measures aimed at avoiding or limiting negative effects on the environment,
- who the relevant authority is,
- the procedure for assessment, including the procedure for objections against the approval,
- where material/information about the project can be obtained.

The relevant authority has no obligation to follow any objection to the projects. However, as the authority has to argue for its decisions in writing, which in practise encourages the authority to take objections etc. into consideration.

*Public participation in decisions on specific activities - The Law on Protection of the Environment (Miljøbeskyttelsesloven)*

According to the Law on Protection of the Environment certain businesses has to be approved before establishment, modifications or extensions.

Before deciding on any such project the public must be informed through public announcement. The public is then given the opportunity to forward comments etc. to the project.

*Public participation in decisions on specific activities - Nature protection*

The provisions in the Planning Act on public participation are relevant to many activities in the field of nature protection, exploitation of raw materials and afforestation. Supplementary to the provisions, the public in general and/or their representatives have a statutory right to be involved in the decision-making process related to a number of matters concerning nature protection,
hunting and game management, forestry, water courses and conservation of buildings. Furthermore, practices have been established according to which the public is involved through e.g. public meetings and local committees.

Physical Planning

Besides special procedures for approval of certain production facilities etc. the Law on Physical Planning prescribes specific procedures of information and consultation regarding physical planning.

The following plans are made:

- Regional plans covering counties or more, specifying for what purposes different areas in the region can be used, and how each area should be developed.
- Municipal plans that, within the frames set by the relevant regional plan, establish for what purpose each peace of land in the municipality can be used.
- Local plans covering the use of specific properties.

According to the law every such plan must be published at least 8 weeks before authorities make a decision on whether to enact the plan. Information about the plans is publicised in the local press and the plans are made available to the public. Every citizen can forward objections and proposals to the plans.

As regards regional and municipal plans the authorities are obliged to call for proposals from the public before drafting the plans.

At the national level, the Ministry of Environment and Energy makes the so-called National Plan Directives. Plans made at the regional or municipal level has to be made within the frames set down by these plans. There is no legal obligation to consult or inform the public regarding the National Plan Directives. However, normally the minister follows the same procedures as when regional and municipal plans are enacted.

Laws establishing similar, though not identical, procedures of consultation, information and public participation exists regarding wastewater, collection of garbage and water supply in the municipalities.

13.4 Implementation tools and practises

The Information Centre (Miljøbutikken)

The Information Centre is the main information centre of Denmark’s Ministry of Environment and Energy. The information Centre provides information related to environment and energy and on Denmark’s legislation and policies in these areas. The Information Centre opened in 1994 because the Ministry wanted to make it easier to obtain information on the environment.

Students and other individuals, companies, organizations, educational institutions, customers outside Denmark and many others interested in the environment have received information material and purchased literature from The Information Centre since then.

More information about The Information Centre can be found on the Internet at the following address: http://www.mem.dk/butik/ukindex.htm.
The Internet
The Ministry of Environment and Energy has established a homepage with bills, news, laws, reports, a newsletter from the minister, résumés of press stories on environmental issues and links to free databases with information related to the environment.

It is the intention to publish every new publication on the Internet and to scan a major part of the old publications so that they are available free of charge.

13.5 Evaluation and information

When relevant, Government-Citizens Connections are assessed in connection with evaluations of policy programmes.

Furthermore, the number of visitors at the ministry's homepage and e-mails and phone calls to the Information Centre (Miljøbutikken) are registered and evaluated.
14 Ministry of Finance

14.1 Introduction

The Ministry of Finance consists of the department and three agencies, the Financial Administration Agency (Finansstyrelsen), the Agency for Financial Management and administrative affairs (Økonomistyrelsen), and the Agency for Personnel Policy.

It is the goal of the Ministry of Finance to give the Minister of Finance and the government the best possible basis for decisions on how to conduct sound economic policies.

In particular this goal of contributing to sound economic policies is pursued through the following main activities:

- analyses of the development in the macroeconomic conditions of the country.
- budgetary work and ongoing analyses of expenditures
- negotiations about the economic frames for municipalities and counties
- negotiations about wages and terms of employment for state staff
- public and human resource management aiming at ensuring effective and efficient institutions.

In addition to serving the Minister of Finance and the Government the ministry also has a role in supporting a sound economic development through contact to other ministries, agencies, interest organisations, the press and others.

Many of the ministry's tasks cut across other ministries, and the Ministry of Finance typically plays a co-ordinating role.

Information about the Ministry of Finance can be found at the following address on the Internet http://www.fm.dk/uk/default.asp

14.2 General context

In general, citizens are not directly involved in decision making or policy formulation on the areas for which the Ministry of Finance has the responsibility. Policies related to the budget, the negotiations with the municipalities and counties on the yearly economic frames and collective bargaining are formulated on the background of negotiations among elected politicians.

However, consultation, participation and especially information is emphasised in a range of areas, giving citizens influence through the public debate, through the involvement of stakeholder organisations in ad hoc committees and through extensive use of the ministry's homepage.

14.3 Legal and policy framework

No special legal framework obliges the Ministry of Finance to consult or inform citizens other than those mentioned in section Error! Reference source not found. above.
14.4 Implementation tools and practises

Service & Welfare

"Service & Welfare" is a result of co-operation between the Danish government, the Association of County Councils and the Association of Local Municipalities.

The purpose of the project is to create a framework for public sector learning and public sector reform, and to promote public debate on the future challenges of the public sector.

The project is based on the principle of Web Governance. This means that emphasis is placed on facilitating networks and promoting public debate involving citizens and professionals alike.

The first purpose of the project is to facilitate experiments and the sharing of knowledge about management, organisation and citizen relations within the public sector.

Two initiatives are taken in this regard:

- First, electronic networks are created. The purpose is to bring together public sector professionals, who share similar challenges, problems and/or ambitions in experimenting with new ways of solving the public tasks.
- Second, specific experiments and initiatives are analysed and evaluated. The results of which are communicated to the relevant networks and the public sector at large.

The second purpose of the project is to create a framework for public sector reforms. Initiatives are taken on information about services and the use of electronic self-service.

The third purpose of the project is to promote the public debate on the future of the welfare society at large, including issues related to public management.

Three initiatives are taken in order to promote the debate:

- A series of public conferences
- Three pamphlets published by the government about issues related to 1) challenges to the welfare society, 2) government-citizen relations, and 3) efficiency, quality and management in the public sector.
- A forum for public debate created on the project homepage.

This site forms the communicative axis of the Service & Welfare project with forums in which public managers and employees can co-ordinate experiments of renewal and exchange practices and issues of professional interest, and where citizens, users and employees can exchange views and opinions about core issues regarding the challenges of the welfare society in general and the public sector in particular.

Surveys of citizens satisfaction and trust

The ministry of Finance regularly conducts national quantitative surveys on citizens’ satisfaction with public services. An English summary of the survey from 1998 can be found on the internet at the following address:

Qualitative and/or qualitative surveys on citizens’ attitudes, experiences and priorities are also carried out from time to time in connection to ad hoc analyses of policy areas.

**Personnel & pay policy**

The Ministry of Finance is the overall employer for 200,000 central government employees, having jobs as different as those of university professors, train drivers, policemen, administrative employee in the central administration, and ballet dancers.

Consequently, the Minister of Finance is negotiating pay and employment terms and conditions with the employee organisations. One of the tasks related to this is the development of the overall personnel - and pay policy framework.

The formulation of the overall personnel policy takes place in ad hoc co-operation with the relevant trade unions.
15 The Association of County Councils in Denmark

15.1 Introduction

The Association of County Councils in Denmark was founded in 1913, and employs approximately 160 persons. The association represents the interests of all 14 Danish counties, and provides them with services and information. It promotes and supports the principles of regional autonomy and acts as spokesman for the county councils in all matters related to the central government and other national associations, and serves as the central collective wage bargaining organisation of the counties.

Politically Elected Board
The Association of County Councils in Denmark is an autonomous body, governed by the members and headed by a board. The board is appointed for a 4-year period by the general assembly of all 374 county councillors. The board reflects in its composition the political allegiances of the 374 county councillors.

Negotiations with the Government and Ministries
The Association has an ongoing dialogue with the Government and Ministries on economic and legislative matters. The Association is represented in various commissions preparing new regulations and tasks. The Danish legislation is increasingly influenced by the European Union, and EU legislation directly touches upon county competences in several areas. Since 1994 the Association has had a direct representation in Brussels.

One of the Most Significant Employers
The counties employ more than 120,000 staff, which makes the counties one of the most significant public employers. The Association of County Councils conducts negotiations on a regular basis with the relevant staff organisations about their members’ pay and working conditions.

Jointly run enterprises
Various enterprises and companies are run jointly or separately by the two local government organisations in Denmark - The Association of County Councils and The National Association of Local Authorities (organising 273 of the 275 Danish municipalities).

These enterprises provide services for local and county government and include among others the biggest data processing agency in the country – Kommunedata - and the Local Government Training Centre - Den Kommunale Højskole.

More information about the Association of County Councils in Denmark can be found at the following address on the Internet http://www.arf.dk/english/default.asp.

15.2 General context

The association in its response stresses the importance of dialogue between local politicians and the citizens as the core connection between decision-making bodies and the citizens.

15.3 Legal and policy framework
In some areas there are obligatory procedures for consultation with the citizens – this is for example the case as regards physical regional planning, c.f. section 13.3 above.

Besides these areas the counties themselves decides how to deal with information, consultation and participation. All counties have homepages on the Internet, some counties have experimented with electronic debates on the web, many counties arrange public conferences, hearings or meetings from time to time on current issues, and some use focus groups and fixed hours where citizens can meet with politicians.

15.4 Implementation tools and practises

The following examples can be mentioned as regards implementation tools and practises:

- Viborg County each day produces a list covering a description of all incoming and outgoing mail to and from the county. The description covers who have send the letter, to whom the letter is addressed and a short description of the content. The list is published on the Internet and updated daily. As they say on their WebPages "public debate does not make decisions easier, but we believe it makes them better"
- Among others, Frederiksborg County has introduced fixed "office hours" every week where citizens can phone chairpersons of the committees in the county.
- Fyns County has held a meeting with citizens on "difficult questions" as for example the number and size of hospitals in the county.
- Nordjyllands County has established the framework for an electronic debate on the county’s WebPages with the purpose of strengthening information, consultation, and participation among the citizens in relation to the formulation of a new regional blueprint for physical planning and protection of the environment.
- Vejle County (http://www.vejleamt.dk/Sprog.nsf/dir/english.hml) has introduced PC-games where players have the role of politicians having to make priorities and experience the consequences of their choices. The purpose is to inspire and qualify citizens participation in the public debate.

15.5 Evaluation and information

There is no information on evaluation and information the association

II. USE OF NEW ICTs

12. Does the government have an overall policy for making public information available online (e.g. objectives to make all or a certain percentage of public records accessible by e-mail or on the World Wide Web)?

Yes.

12.1 If yes, please describe, including targets established for on-line provision of information.

The central objectives in the Government’s new action plan for transition into the Network society (Dec. 99 – an English version is obtainable at www.fsk.dk ) is that Denmark:

- should have the most modern, future-proof infrastructure in which as many citizens as possible have cheap broadband access
• gives its citizens fundamental IT rights so that they feel comfortable and secure when they are on the Internet
• ensures its citizens of life-long learning and quality in the network society
• is committed to e-commerce and maintains Denmark’s position of strength as a competent trading nation
• makes it easy for its citizens to contact the public authorities 24 hours a day
• enhances IT policy efficiency through, for example, annual network reports.

Furthermore a number of initiatives aimed particularly at public sector on-line services has been set out in The Government action plan for transition into the Network society (Dec. 99).

1. Electronic Bridge across Øresund
On the initiative of the Government and in co-operation with the relevant Swedish authorities, an information function is to be established in the Øresund region on, among other things, the labour market, tax regulations and social services regulations on both sides of Øresund. The initiative is to facilitate the integration of citizens and trade and industry in the Øresund region and consequently create a basis for Ørestaden as an e-commerce centre. The Øresund information will be based on the Internet, call centre, etc. This initiative should be seen as cyber support to the physical bridge between Denmark and Sweden, which is to open this summer.

2. Citizens’ Access to Their Own Electronic Data
It must be ensured that citizens can use the existing access to acquire information about themselves and that public data about citizens are not monopolised by various public authorities and enterprises.

3. Personal Internet Access to the Public Authorities
All Danish citizens are to be offered personal Internet access which can give them access to publicly registered information about themselves, to a customised information system and to easy, rapid, secure self-service in relation to public authorities and institutions. The objective is better service, enhanced efficiency and more openness.

4. Public Information Server
On the basis of already existing public registers, a public information server is to be established. This information server is to give citizens and enterprises easy, secure access to the large quantity of information registered by the public authorities on Denmark and Danish citizens. This is the first step on the way to citizens only needing to give data to the public authorities once.

5. Electronic Forms
Before the end of 2000, citizens are to be able, via the Internet, to retrieve, complete and submit the most common forms used by citizens, such as notices of change of address, notices of change of doctors, etc. An increasing number of forms are to be offered on the Internet so that all important forms can be found on the Internet before the end of 2002.

6. Effective Electronic Filing
The Danish Public Records Act stipulates, as does the Danish Freedom of Information Act and the Danish Public Administration Act, that records must be kept of public documents. The Ministry of Research and Information Technology has implemented a review as an introduction to a plan of action, which is to speed up the switch of the public administration to electronic administration, including effective electronic filing.
7. Mark Book for Public Home Pages
In order to improve the quality of the public home pages, a quality check will be made four times a year. The evaluation of the public home pages with the grades awarded will be published. The objective is to ensure that the public sector is at the forefront regarding the utilisation of the possibilities offered by the Internet for better service and greater user-friendliness, including general accessibility for the disabled.

8. Open Mail Lists on the Internet
The Ministry of Research and Information Technology is starting a trial with open mail lists. In the light of, among other things, the experience gained from this trial, a plan may be prepared for how public authorities can offer citizens easy access to monitor the public sector, for example by public authorities making their mail lists available to the public on the Internet.

The Danish Government has since 1997 released their publications on the Internet in parallel with the printed versions. The Internet publications will in technical terms be broadly accessible and searchable, along with being uniform and future-proofed.
(read more: http://www.si.dk/netsteder/publ/netpubl2/kolofon.htm#R1)

12.2 Are there Web sites that can be identified as promising “models” for providing user-friendly information, services and opportunities for interaction?

www.detdigitaledanmark.dk The site is providing cross departmental information regarding new IT initiatives. The broad approach results in an open debate, on the site.

Www.ringsted.dk is a municipality site where citizens can use digital signatures to provide the municipality with information.

Www.sum.dk is the ministry of health’s web site. The site allows citizens the locate hospitals where specific treatments can be carried out with short notice.

Www.service-og-velfaerd.dk. Please refer to appendix 1 for information on the site.

On www.uvm.dk, which is the web site ministry of education, it is possible to have live private net chat with the minister – usually on Thursdays. Each chat is expected to last approximately 5 minutes. 12 - 15 persons usually get through to the minister.

13. What actions have been taken to facilitate and increase citizen use of new information technologies in their relations with the government (for example, subsidies for computers, training, publicity, etc.)?

• All publications and reports etc. issued by state institutions must be published on the Internet.
• All libraries have computers with Internet connections. Citizens can surf on the Internet on the libraries for free.
• All primary schools have computers with Internet connections
• A public website, www.danmark.dk, with links to Danish public authorities and information about the Danish society has been established
• All of the Danish legislation is available at the Internet at www.retsinfo.dk

14. Please describe the government’s policies, plans and initiatives, including targets, to provide public servants with access to PC’s, e-mail, Intranets and the World Wide Web?

The decentralised administrative structure in Denmark leaves it to the institutions to decide on the desire level of IT-infrastructure. Therefore there is no specific strategy in this area.

A central element in using IT to provide services and information to citizens has been to set targets for public institutions’ creation of homepages for the disposal of citizens. One of the underlying assumptions to these targets has been that the public servants should and would be given at least the same possibilities as the citizens when it comes to access to modern information technology tools.

15. Does the government attempt to encourage IT-enabled public consultation on government policy development?

Examples mentioned above are www.service-og-velfaerd.dk, described in appendix one. The weekly chat-forums held by the minister of education, is another example.

At www.detdigitaledanmark citizens were encouraged to deliver input to the policy formulation on IT-issues.

One goal has been and still is an official e-mail address for every government agency. Most government agencies today have an official e-mail address.

In The Government action plan for transition into the Network society (Dec. 99) benchmarking of official web sites has been decided. The benchmarking, which will be a reoccurring event, will amongst other things focus on issues related to IT-enabled public consultation.

16. What issues that are not fully covered by this survey in relation to government use of information technologies -- and emerging use of new technologies in particular -- may be of growing importance to your government in the future?

EDI interaction with companies.