



Societal & Political Engagement
of Young People in Environmental Issues

D7.4: 1st Network of Interest

WP7 – Dissemination



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 649493

Document Information

Grant Agreement Number	649493	Acronym	STEP	
Full Project Title	Societal and political engagement of young people in environmental issues			
Start Date	1 st June 2015	Duration	30 months	
Project URL	www.step4youth.eu			
Deliverable	D7.4 - 1 st Network of Interest			
Work Package	WP 7 - Dissemination			
Date of Delivery	Contractual	01 June 2016	Actual	03 June 2016
Nature	R - Report	Dissemination Level	P – Public	
Lead Beneficiary	PLANO2			
Responsible Author	Mr. Vassileios Tsekeridis			
Contributions from	Dr. Eleni Hatziyanni, Mr. Christodoulos Keratidis, Dr. (Ms.) Machi Simeonidou, Mr. Lazaros Xenidis, Ms. Maria Vogiatzi, Ms. Ioanna Pavlou, Ms. Roxana Nica			

Document History

Version	Issue Date	Stage	Changes	Contributor
1.0	20/04/2016	Draft		Mr. Vassileios Tsekeridis
1.1	20/05/2016	Draft	Contributions to the initial contact list of the STEP NoI	Mr. Christodoulos Keratidis, Dr. Machi Simeonidou, Mr. Lazaros Xenidis, Ms. Maria Vogiatzi, Ms. Ioanna Pavlou, Ms. Roxana Nica
2.0	01/06/2016	Final	Final Amended after internal review procedure	Dr. (Ms.) Eleni Hatziyanni

Disclaimer

The present Deliverable reflects only the author's view and the Research Executive Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

Copyright message

© STEP Consortium, 2015

This deliverable contains original unpublished work except where clearly indicated otherwise. Acknowledgement of previously published material and of the work of others has been made through appropriate citation, quotation or both. Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

Table of Contents

1	Executive summary	4
2	Introduction	5
2.1	Purpose of the deliverable	5
2.2	Structure and contents of the deliverable	5
2.3	Upcoming Nol deliverables	5
3	STEP Network of Interest	6
3.1	Definition	6
3.2	Methodology of the Nol establishment	6
3.3	STEP Target network categories	7
3.4	Data entry	7
3.5	Targets and Metrics	8
4	Analysis	9
4.1	Group type	9
4.2	Country	10
4.3	EU/Non EU	11
4.4	Type of stakeholder	11
5	Discussion	12
6	Activities performed so far	13
7	Overview of the progress towards the expected results	13
8	Future plans and engagement with the Nol	13
9	Conclusions	14
	ANNEX A - Invitation Letter	15

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Number of Nol entries per group category as of end of May 2016	9
Figure 2: Number of Nol entries per EU or Non EU countries	11
Figure 3: Number of entries per organisation type	12

1 Executive summary

The Deliverable D7.4 “1st Network of Interest” provides an overview of the STEP Network of Interest (NoI), the work carried out so far for the development and maintenance of the network, and the future plans to engage with the network.

The STEP NoI is a community of individual persons originating from different types of organisations, who share a common interest relevant to the STEP objectives. These individuals can act as a main dissemination pole for other stakeholders but also have the potential to create the first customer base for the future commercialisation of the STEP outcomes. The aim of the dissemination activities targeted to the STEP NoI is to identify and reach potential stakeholders/users of the STEP platform in order to motivate them to act as a main dissemination pole for other stakeholders but also to create the first customer base for the future commercialisation of the STEP platform. The NoI helps to ensure that the STEP eParticipation platform will be relevant to future possible stakeholders. Until now the engagement with the NoI is being done through email communications and newsletters.

The work carried out so far can be summarised as follows:

- An invitation letter was sent out to prospective members.
- A list of 887 members of the NoI have been identified.
- A set of categorical variables have been assigned to each entry.
- The collected data were statistically analysed.
- The target set for Month 30 has been reached to a great extent as early as Month 12.
- The first STEP newsletter has been sent to the initial contact list.

Future plans include:

- A semi-annual newsletter will be sent to all members throughout the duration of the project.
- The visibility of the project in social media will be increased so that more members for the NoI are acquired.
- A series of webinars will be organised for the network members for creating open public feedback.
- Specific recommendations will be asked from the STEP partners for further NoI expansion and diversification

An updated version of this deliverable will be submitted in April 2017 (M23).

2 Introduction

2.1 Purpose of the deliverable

The purpose of the deliverable D7.4 1st Network of Interest is to describe and present the methodology and reasoning behind the establishment and maintenance of the STEP NoI, to describe the actions performed to engage new NoI members, to document the feedback received from them, and to provide a statistical analysis regarding the current members of the network. This deliverable also includes all the future engagement activities that will be executed until M23 when an updated report will be prepared, and plans to maintain the members' interest on the STEP eParticipation platform as well as plans on further network development.

2.2 Structure and contents of the deliverable

The structure of the deliverable is the following:

Chapter 3 includes a definition of what the STEP NoI is, a description of the methodology used to approach the members as well as to define the tools for data entry and the different types of group categories that form the NoI. This chapter also includes the projected metrics and targets set in the STEP project DoA and Dissemination plan.

Chapter 4 is dedicated exclusively to the analysis of the NoI entries and the graphical representation of the results.

Chapter 5 includes a short discussion on the analysis of the 1st version of STEP NoI.

Chapter 6 includes a brief description of all the activities performed so far regarding the NoI.

Chapter 7 includes an overview of the progress towards the target metrics.

Chapter 8 provides recommendations on future engagement with the STEP NoI as well as plans to expand the network. This includes ways to maintain the communication, interaction, and interest of the network.

Finally, Annex A presents the Invitation Letter that was sent to the network for establishing an initial contact with the potential members.

2.3 Upcoming NoI deliverables

The establishment and maintenance of the STEP NoI will be an ongoing process that spans throughout the entire lifetime of the STEP project. For that reason a number of deliverables will be prepared for keeping up with the progress of the network development and engagement. These deliverables have been carefully placed in selected time periods that reflect the overall progress of the project. The current deliverable is due on Month 12 (End of May 2016). The deliverable D7.6 2nd Network of Interest, which is an update of D7.4, is due on Month 23 (End of April 2017) and will be the 2nd report on the activities to enrich the NoI and the feedback regarding the platform received until that date. The deliverable D7.9 3rd Network of Interest is due on Month 30 (End of November 2017) and will be the final version of the report on the STEP NoI.

3 STEP Network of Interest

3.1 Definition

The STEP NoI is a **community of individual persons** who belong and are affiliated with a variety of private companies, governmental and non-governmental organisations at a local, regional and national level, and share a common interest related to the STEP project. The idea behind the NoI is to gather potential stakeholders/users of the platform, to exchange information and thoughts on the STEP eParticipation platform and its components, but also to offer these individuals the opportunity to test the STEP eParticipation platform and provide feedback. The main objective of the NoI establishment is to **act as a main dissemination pole for other stakeholders** but also to create the first customer base for the future commercialisation of the STEP platform.

3.2 Methodology of the NoI establishment

Initially, with the beginning of the STEP dissemination activities, representatives of all the project partners acted as the dissemination channel that ensured the identification and commitment of experts in the field related to high-level of knowledge and experience in policy making and environmental issues. Partners YEE, DRAXIS and PLANO2 have been in charge of this process. YEE has informed its members (environmental youth organisations) about the project and asked them to participate in the STEP NoI. Furthermore, until Month 4, all project partners contributed in suggesting contacts for the project's NoI. This process resulted in the establishment of two groups. These are a) the **Core Group** which consists of stakeholders who are considered to be of particular interest for STEP and b) the **General Group** which includes the rest of the contacts that may have an interest on the project. The Core Group was formed from a partner screening activity, with the objective to limit interested users to those who have both the interest and the potential to utilise the STEP solution, or can be the future customers' base of STEP. Moreover, only the members of the Core Group received an invitation letter (ANNEX A - Invitation Letter) that described the purpose of the network and proposed them to participate in the network activities.

All members of both the Core and the General user groups will receive a semi-annual newsletter depicting the project progress, they will be encouraged to participate in technical/scientific discussions through the project website or social media accounts, and they will provide their feedback for the best implementation of the project. These individuals are expected to be interested in the results of STEP and, therefore, the STEP consortium will try to keep them up to date about the project progress and will encourage them to participate in project activities.

The STEP NoI encompasses individuals of all relevant roles that belong to different categories of networks, associations and organisations, private or public. These are key actors in either designing public participation strategies or participating to public consultations or decision-making procedures. Specifically the NoI establishment efforts focused on identifying and engaging representatives of European and national youth associations, environmental NGOs, representatives of EU projects with objectives similar to the ones of STEP, experts in the field of environmental protection, universities and Research Centres active in the fields of environment and youth participation, and experts with high-level knowledge and experience in policy making and environmental issues. An analysis of the profiles of individual categories is presented in the following chapter.

The establishment, management and maintenance of the STEP NoI will be an ongoing activity that will last throughout the duration of the project. The establishment of the STEP NoI has the potential to boost the dissemination activities and visibility of the project but also to enhance the engagement of the STEP target

groups and to provide the necessary knowledge to the project partners in order to disseminate the project objectives on local, regional, national and European level.

3.3 STEP Target network categories

In order to set the basis for the analysis of the collected contact list of individuals, the categories presented in the previous chapter have been narrowed down and grouped in the following categories: 1) NGOs/Environmental and Youth Organisations, 2) Public Authorities, 3) SMEs/ Private companies, 4) Existing Platforms, 5) University/Institute/Research Centres and 6) Organisers of relevant events.

NGOs/Environmental and Youth Organisations: This category includes representatives that are active in civil environmental non-governmental and non-profit organisations, youth networks, and communities of practice with a focus on engaging young people to support and adopt an environmental sensitive vision for life and the future. Some of these organisations seek to create effective relationships with the government and other relevant organisations, offer training workshops and assistance, establish environmental solutions, and manage projects implemented to address issues affecting a particular area. Most of the members of these organisations are young people from different social groups, including political parties, ad-hoc groups and lobbying groups. Such organisations often have volunteering programs and seek collaborations with public authorities when developing their environmental initiatives. Some of the representatives of these NGOs and networks have in-depth knowledge in decision making procedures for youth and/ or environment in their region.

Public Authorities: This category includes individuals who work for public organisations and authorities that are responsible and are actively involved in environmental decision making. This category includes both administrative officers and political persons, either young or not, involved in the procedures of environmental decision making. Examples include Environmental Ministries, Regional Authorities and municipalities, international policy making agencies and Networks. The geographical scale of these agencies can range from local, regional, national or international. National peculiarities in respect to the type, role and synthesis of public authorities will be mentioned and taken into account.

SMEs/ Private Companies: This category includes individuals who own or work for SMEs and other private companies that are active in e-government and eParticipation tools development and commercialisation (mostly ICT), companies that draw economic activity around the protection of environment such as ecotourism, and consultancy firms (e.g. the Athens Technology Center, BIRIKA Permakultura, etc.).

Existing Platforms: This category includes individuals who work on and maintain existing eParticipation platforms and initiatives.

University/Institute/Research Centers: This category includes individuals from academia and scientists from all the universities, institutes and research centres that are active in environmental research, youth participation and/or policy making.

Miscellaneous: The last category includes individuals that belong to other categories (e.g. are active in organising events relevant to youth and/or environment, etc.).

3.4 Data entry

In order to list the members of the STEP NoI, a standard spreadsheet software was used. The following **column variables** were created to assist effective data entry: 1) **Name**, 2) **Email**, 3) **Organisation** that includes the name of the organisation that the individual is working for or is affiliated with, 4) **Type of Stakeholder** variable describes the type of organisation of the individual. This variable has prefixed values that are the target network categories presented in the previous chapter. 5) **Country** includes the country that the organisation is based in and is active, 6) **EU/Non EU** variable describes whether the organisation is based in

an EU or non EU country, 7) **Group Type** variable describes if the individual belongs to the Core Group or the General Group.

If necessary, the dataset will be enriched with more variables in the upcoming NoI deliverables that will enable a more in depth analysis. Examples of such variables are the level of engagement of each individual with STEP and the degree of adoption of STEP platform. The inclusion of other variables such as gender or age is still under discussion since these data can be considered personal. These variables will be included only after consent has been provided by the individual persons.

3.5 Targets and Metrics

The establishment and maintenance of the NoI is a dissemination activity of the STEP project. Therefore it has to be monitored for its progress and effectiveness towards the targets set in the STEP Dissemination Plan. The dissemination impact indicator for the STEP NoI is **1.000 registered individual stakeholders** by the end of the project.

4 Analysis

This chapter is dedicated to the analysis of the list of individuals that constitute the STEP Nol. As of the date that the current deliverable was being written (End of May 2016) the Nol list contains **887 individual entries**.

4.1 Group type

From the total entries of the Nol, 137 belong to the Core Group and the rest 750 belong to the General Group.

Group Type	Number of Entries
Core	137
General	750
Total	887

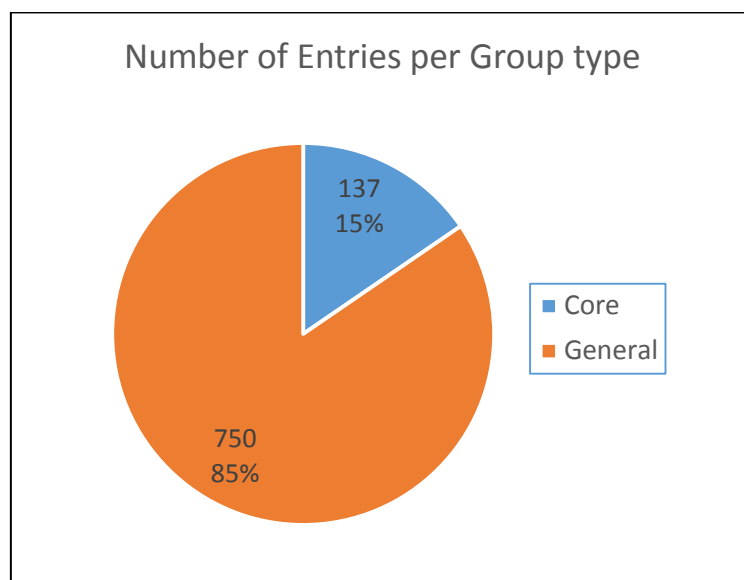


Figure 1: Number of Nol entries per group category as of end of May 2016

4.2 Country

The variable “Country” includes the country that the organisation is based and is active. The number of entries describes the number of individuals registered in the STEP Nol.

Country	Number of Entries	%
Belgium	160	18,04
Lithuania	98	11,05
Germany	60	6,76
Austria	56	6,31
Switzerland	50	5,64
Czech Republic	49	5,52
Sweden	35	3,95
Spain	30	3,38
UK	28	3,16
Italy	27	3,04
Finland	24	2,71
Portugal	23	2,59
Armenia	22	2,48
Luxembourg	22	2,48
Serbia	21	2,37
Croatia	18	2,03
Cyprus	18	2,03
FYROM	18	2,03
Netherlands	14	1,58
Estonia	10	1,13
Latvia	10	1,13

Country	Number of Entries	%
Romania	9	1,01
Greece	8	0,90
Malta	8	0,90
Russia	8	0,90
Ireland	7	0,79
Slovakia	7	0,79
Hungary	6	0,68
Albania	5	0,56
Denmark	5	0,56
France	5	0,56
Poland	5	0,56
Slovenia	5	0,56
Norway	4	0,45
Ukraine	3	0,34
Bulgaria	2	0,23
Georgia	2	0,23
Kenya	2	0,23
Iceland	1	0,11
Korea	1	0,11
Moldova	1	0,11
Total	887	100

4.3 EU/Non EU

The variable “EU/Non EU” indicates whether the organisation of registered individuals is based in a country that is a member of the European Union or not.

EU/ Non EU	Number of Entries	%
EU	749	84
Non EU	138	16
Total	887	100

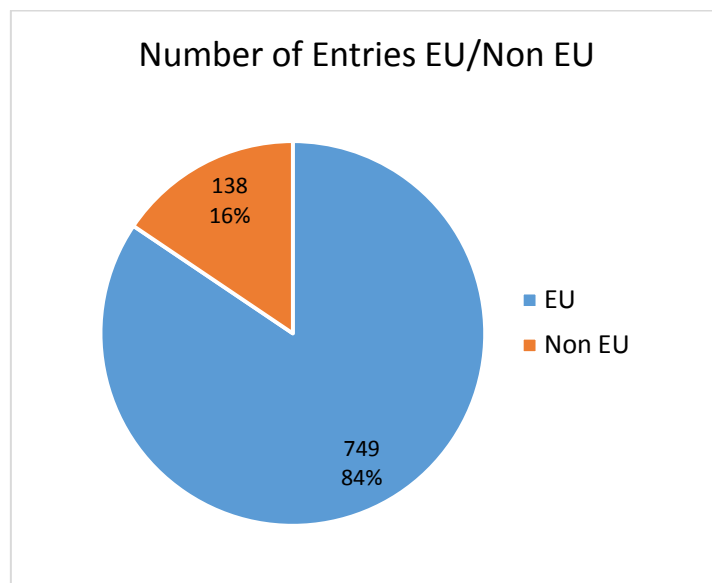


Figure 2: Number of Nol entries per EU or Non EU countries

4.4 Type of stakeholder

The variable “Type of stakeholder” describes the type of organisations to which the registered individuals belong.

Type of Stakeholder	Number of Entries	%
NGO/ Environmental and Youth Organisations	702	79,1
Platform	50	5,6
Public Authorities	62	7,0
SMEs	7	0,8
University/Institute/Research Center	64	7,2
Miscellaneous	2	0,2
Total	887	100

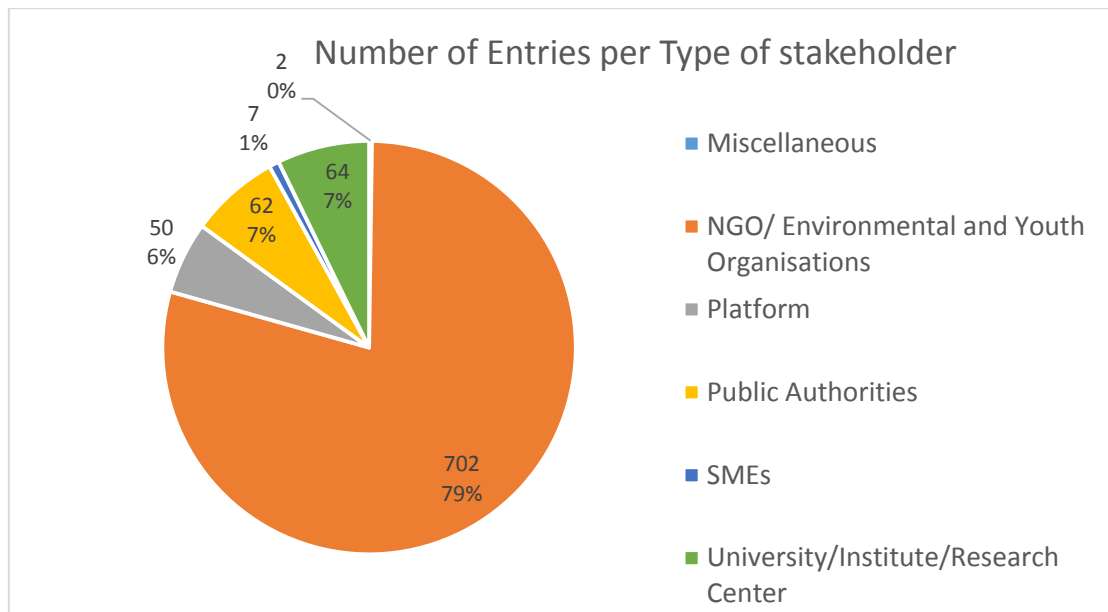


Figure 3: Number of entries per organisation type

5 Discussion

Within this chapter a brief discussion on the results generated from the analysis of the 1st version of the STEP Nol list is presented. To start with, it has to be noted that the partners who were responsible for the compilation of the Nol list and the maintenance of the contacts have put their best effort to identify, locate and engage most of the individual entries of the list. However, the development of the Nol is an ongoing procedure that lasts during the whole duration of the STEP project and it will be kept updated and in revision. Throughout the duration of the project, any additional contacts that are added to the partners' networks will be added to the STEP Nol. Furthermore, the STEP project recognition and the dissemination activities will enlarge our network of contacts, and these will be added to the Nol.

Regarding the variable "Group type", the 137 entries of the Core Group represented 15% of the Nol whereas the General Group with 750 entries represented the 85% of the network. The difference that has occurred between the two groups can be attributed to the fact that the individuals who are more relevant to the project and were included in the Core Group are far fewer than the contacts for which there is a possibility to have an interest in the project.

Regarding the variable "Country", a heterogeneous distribution of entries from 41 different countries is observed. The existence of 160 entries (18,04%) from Belgium is attributed to the fact that many pan-European organisations have their headquarters there.

Regarding the variable "EU/Non EU", the majority of entries (84%) originate from the EU. This is attributed to the fact that STEP is an EU funded project targeting primarily EU audiences but also due to the fact that most project partners come from EU, therefore their stakeholder search is focused on EU.

Finally, regarding the variable "Type of Stakeholder", 702 (79,1 %) entries were from an NGO/Environmental and Youth organisations, while the contacts originated from University/Institute/Research Centers, Public Authorities and Existing Platforms had approximately the same representation in the Nol with 7,2 %, 7 % and 5,6 % respectively. The dominance of NGO/Environmental and Youth Organisations entries reflects the importance of these organisations in youth movement in EU and beyond. Also these results denote that, for

the next period, more attempts should be made to engage more Public Authorities and relevant initiatives in the STEP NoI.

6 Activities performed so far

The first STEP newsletter has been prepared and sent to the initial contact list via a professional mass emailing solution (Mailchimp) in March 2016 (M10). The topics addressed in this newsletter were:

- The concept of the STEP project
- The importance of youth participation in decision-making procedures in environmental issues
- The technology used in STEP
- The reasons for being involved in the STEP project
- A presentation of the STEP consortium and the STEP External Expert Advisory Board
- A brief description of the pilot operations
- Information about the STEP meetings that took place in Thessaloniki and Istanbul
- A brief description of the STEP progress.

After this first communication, any member of the NoI was able to unsubscribe from the STEP mailing list. However, only 8 of them asked to be excluded from the list. This is an evidence of the interests of most of the members of the NoI to the STEP project. Moreover, 17 hard bounces occurred meaning that either the recipient email addresses/ domain names do not exist or the recipient email servers have completely blocked delivery. These email addresses will be fixed or deleted from the NoI member list.

The second STEP newsletter is under preparation and it will be sent to the updated contact list of the NoI until the end of June 2016.

7 Overview of the progress towards the expected results

As already presented in Chapter 3.5-Targets and Metrics, the dissemination impact indicator for the STEP NoI is 1.000 registered individual stakeholders by the end of the project (Month 30). Until now (Month 12) there are 887 registered individual stakeholders. This number indicates that **88% of the target initially set has been reached** as early as of Month 12. This can be assessed as good progress and if the rate of new entries is kept steady then the target initially set will not only be fulfilled but also surpassed.

8 Future plans and engagement with the NoI

The main objective of future engagement with the STEP NoI is to maintain communication with the existing and future members of the network, to keep up their interest and continue the interaction with them. Until now member engagement has taken place through individual or mass email exchanges. New tools and actions to maintain participation and encourage active participation and expansion of the network will be employed in the period to come. Such actions and methods include:

- A semi-annual Newsletter that will be sent to all members of the network in order to keep them informed of general news and progress of STEP project.
- Increase the use and feeding of the STEP social media accounts by inviting the members of the network to “Like” and “Follow” the accounts.
- Webinars: A series of webinars will be executed after the first release of the STEP eParticipation platform (from December 2016). This process will give the opportunity to the members of the network to provide a public feedback and get familiar with the platform functionalities.

In addition further recommendations for the network development include: a) Actions must be taken to increase the entries of the Core Group; b) Increase and diversify entries from different countries; c) Expansion of entries from countries outside EU with a focus on Turkey; and d) Increase the entries from other types of organisations, especially from public authorities of different responsibilities and different levels of involvement in policy making and environmental decision system, in respect to different countries; peculiarities.

9 Conclusions

To sum up, with the submission of the current deliverable in Month 12, the Noi has been largely established with major success since 88% of the ultimate target number of members has been already achieved. The analysis and discussion on the results provided an in-depth view of the dataset and revealed further recommendations for future Noi development. The first STEP newsletter has already prepared and sent to the Noi through MailChimp mass email service, while the 2nd version of the STEP newsletter is under development. It is expected that the Noi will grow with success until the end of the project and it will fulfil the purpose for which it was initially established.

ANNEX A - Invitation Letter



INVITATION LETTER

Dear Sir/ Madam,

We would like to invite you to participate in the Network of Interest of our EU funded project STEP. STEP aims to develop and pilot test a cloud eParticipation platform which will promote the societal and political participation of young people in the decision-making process on environmental issues. For more information please visit our website (<http://www.step4youth.eu/>).

You have been selected to be a member of our Network of Interest as we intend to include in it representatives of youth associations, environmental NGOs, and EU projects with objectives similar to the ones of STEP, and experts in the field of environmental protection, youth participation, and policy making.

The members of the STEP Network of Interest will receive our semi-annual newsletter and will be the first to know our news. You are encouraged to disseminate the project objectives and results in any means.

In case you are not interested to participate please let us know.

Best regards,

Christodoulos Keratidis

STEP Project Coordinator



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 649493.