

Environmental Information and Management of Ensuring Access to it (On the Example of Uzbekistan)

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Abstract The importance of environmental information in public administration in the field of environmental protection in the context of the digitalization of the economy is increasing every day, which is directly related to the improvement of the economic. The article reveals the concept of "environmental information" and the importance of reliable information about the qualitative and quantitative state of natural resources as one of its main parts in the context of aggravated environmental crises. In this regard, an important place is occupied by international norms regarding the formation and provision of environmental information. Analyzing the problem of the implementation of international legal norms in the field of formation of environmental information and ensuring access to it for interested bodies and persons in national legislation, the author substantiates the advisability of Uzbekistan's accession to the Aarhus Convention, which regulates, in particular, the issue of providing access to environmental information. On the basis of a comparative analysis of the current legislation in the field of obtaining and using information, as well as international law, the author analyzed some problems of national legislation (the distinction between the concepts of "request" and "appeal", lack of detailing the grounds for refusing to provide environmental information, etc.) and proposals were developed to further improve legislation in the field of formation of environmental information and ensure access to it, which are aimed at legal regulation of the collection, storage, updating and provision of global information about the natural resources of the planet, as well as further improvement of the information environmental resource.

At the same time, the author proposes to adopt a law "On environmental information", which provides for the concept and types of environmental information and information resources, regulating the right of access to environmental information and its restrictions, as well as transfer the function providing environmental information of state bodies to the Unified Register of Electronic State Services, thus ensuring the possibility of obtaining environmental information about the country's natural resources through the "Electronic Government".

Keywords Natural Resource, Environmental Information, JORC Code, Inventory of Biodiversity, Convention Regulation, Request, Appeal

1. Introduction

How long will the existing natural resources necessary for its viability last for a person? The answer to this question can only be given by reliable information about the qualitative and quantitative state of the planet's natural resources. Gone are the days when it seemed that the Earth's resources were inexhaustible. Now we are already thinking about the possibility of exhausting not only minerals and water resources, but also atmospheric oxygen reserves, and in the future the same question may arise even about solar energy resources, although so far its flow seems to us almost inexhaustible.

The formation of reliable information about the qualitative and quantitative state of the planet's natural

resources, as well as the possibility of its direct provision, is one of the main institutions of international environmental law. This is primarily due to the fact that nature does not recognize geographical borders and at this stage of human history, the efforts of one or several countries are not able to prevent an environmental crisis. Understanding these processes dictates the need for closer cooperation of the world community in solving various environmental problems, based on complete and reliable information about the natural resources of the planet.

At the same time, the right to receive environmental information is an integral part of the constitutional right to seek, receive and disseminate any information, with the exception of information directed against the existing constitutional order and other restrictions provided for by law, enshrined in Art. 29 of the Constitution of Uzbekistan.

The deepening of such global environmental crises as climate warming, the reduction of the ozone layer, the accumulation of radioactive waste, etc. puts the issue of forming and providing global information about the planet's natural resources at the forefront of international environmental cooperation. The need for even closer cooperation of the world community was also discussed by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh.Mirziyoyev at the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly on September 21, 2021, noting that "we propose to hold in 2023 in Uzbekistan under the auspices of the United Nations the Sixth UN Environment Assembly at a high level. The participants of the Assembly will have the opportunity to directly get acquainted with the difficult situation in the Aral Sea region, which has become the epicenter of the ecological disaster caused by the drying up of the Aral Sea, and draw their own conclusions. In addition, at the Assembly, we intend to launch an initiative to develop a World Environmental Charter, designed to lay the foundations for a new United Nations environmental policy" [1].

The improvement of the mechanism for the formation and provision of environmental information in the context of climate change should be inextricably linked with environmental accounting, the form of which should change in accordance with economic relations.

1.1. Goals and Objectives of the Study

The main goal of the study is to further improve the regulatory framework for the formation of environmental information in Uzbekistan. To do this, it is necessary to solve such tasks as ensuring a high level of practical application of environmental information in management and economic activities, as well as further improving the mechanism for providing environmental information to interested individuals and legal entities.

1.2. Advanced Foreign Experience

Given the global nature of environmental problems, in

solving which environmental information plays a primary role, the best practices of such developed countries (USA, England), as well as developing countries (Russia, Mexico,) in the formation and provision of environmental information are of great interest to Uzbekistan.

In particular, in the United States, there are specially created National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI), which are the world's largest active archives of environmental data, created in 2015 as a result of the merger of the National Center for Environmental Information (NCEI), the National Geophysical Data Center (NGDC) and the National Oceanographic Data Center (NODC) [2].

Very timely is the legislative consolidation in the Russian legislation of a ban on restricting access to environmental information [3], which is not in the domestic environmental legislation.

As for the direct formation of environmental information, in our opinion, the experience of England and Mexico is more promising for Uzbekistan.

In particular, in the collective work of British scientists, it is proposed to use a new mobile infrastructure of eco-accounting as the basis for natural resource cadastres, which consists of four modules: eco-account of the consumer, eco-shopping, eco-processing and eco-incentives [4].

In the formation of environmental information, in particular, information on the state of natural resources, an important role is played by environmental monitoring data, during which the latest technologies are increasingly involved.

The collective work of Mexican scientists studied the issues of mapping and monitoring fresh (surface) waters in the largest mountain range of Mexico - the Western Sierra Madre (SMO), covering the states of Chihuahua, Sonora, Sinaloa, Durango, Nayarit, Zacatecas and Jalisco, which are of great importance for understanding hydrological processes and water resource management. This study used 120 Sentinel-2 satellite imageries [5].

1.3. International Norms and Their Implementation in National Legislation

In particular, on May 18, 1993, the Republic of Uzbekistan joined the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. The strategic direction of compliance with the international obligations of the Montreal Protocol for Uzbekistan is to completely stop the consumption of hydrochlorofluorocarbons by 2030. In addition, Uzbekistan has been a party to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (New York, May 1992) since 1993, the Kyoto Protocol to this Convention was signed in 1998 and ratified in 1999, and the Paris Agreement was signed in 2017 and ratified in 2018.

In particular, since 1993 Uzbekistan has been a Party to

the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol, as well as all its amendments. Fulfillment of the obligations assumed by the country under the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol is carried out on the basis of the National Program to phase out the use of ODS. As a result of the implementation of the National Program, Uzbekistan is in compliance with the Montreal Protocol; in 2012, 99.95% of ODS (ozone-depleting substances) were withdrawn from circulation, which is ahead of the schedule planned by the Montreal Protocol. In 2016, the Customs Service of Uzbekistan was awarded the prestigious award of the regional ozone network in Europe and Central Asia.

Domestic researcher Khaidarov Sh., in his scientific work, for the first time in domestic environmental science, gives legal regulation of such concepts as "ozone layer", "protection of the ozone layer", "preservation of the ozone layer", determines the main direction in the development of legal regulation of the problem of protection and conservation of the ozone layer in international and national legislation, which consists in the transition from regulation by international acts to predominantly legislative regulation within individual states, aimed primarily at generating information about the reliable state of the atmospheric layer, and also proposed to develop a draft law "On the Prevention of Dangerous Changes in the Composition of the Atmosphere" [6].

Of particular note is the monograph of the domestic scientist K. Akhmerov is the first such special natural-science study in our republic, dedicated to the topic of preserving the ozone layer, during the years of independence. This brochure uses real examples to consider one of the environmental threats - the increase in the "ozone hole". The importance of stratospheric ozone, the formation of information about its current state are described, the problems of ecological balance are revealed, the formation of information on them, and others [7].

Russian researcher P.N. Vargin in his work analyzes the state of implementation of the Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, signed by the Government of the USSR on September 16, 1987, and the formation of information on it, writes: "Past winter seasons with significant destruction of the ozone layer in the Arctic (2010/2011, 2015/2016 and 2019/2020) indicate the need to continue and develop monitoring and research on the dynamic and chemical processes of the stratosphere, the interaction of the stratosphere and the troposphere, and the variability of the ozone layer. Considering Russia's location, continuing climate change, a significant amount of ozone-depleting compounds remaining in the atmosphere, and significant interannual variability in the Arctic stratosphere, these studies remain relevant." [8].

Currently, we are implementing practical measures to implement our international obligations in the field of environmental information generation.

Thus, in order to fulfill the obligation provided for by the Convention on Biological Diversity to implement

measures to collect and systematize data on the state and change of components of biodiversity, regulate the rational use of biological resources that are important for the conservation of biodiversity, preserve the natural habitat, breeding conditions and migration of viable populations, a STRATEGY for the conservation of biological diversity in the Republic of Uzbekistan for the period 2019 was adopted in 2019 — 2028 [6], which provides for the creation of a unified information database of state monitoring and the state cadastre of biodiversity based on modern geoinformation technologies (GIS technologies) and the REGULATION on environmental monitoring in the Republic of Uzbekistan [9].

In addition, since last year, the introduction of international standards for reporting on the results of geological exploration and approval of mineral reserves in accordance with the JORC Code has been launched [10]. The JORC Code is the Austroasiatic Code of Reporting on Exploration Results, Mineral Resources and Ore Reserves, which sets out minimum standards, recommendations and principles for the application of public reporting on exploration results, mineral resources and ore reserves in Australasia. This Code was adopted by the Austro-Asian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy (AusIMM) and the Australian Institute of Geologists and Geophysicists (AIG), being mandatory for the members of this organization. The Joint Committee on Ore Reserves (JORC) was established in 1971 and, prior to the publication of the first edition of the JORC Code in 1989, prepared a number of reports with recommendations on the classification of reserves and public reporting of ore reserves [11].

2. Literature Review

Many scientific works of domestic and foreign legal scientists are devoted to the problem of improving the mechanism of international cooperation in the field of environmental protection, the basis of which is environmental information, on which the effectiveness of all environmental activities depends [12,13,14].

At the same time, in the legal literature, the problem of the formation of environmental information is considered as the basis of the country's environmental policy.

In particular, E. Bychkova highlights the following features of environmental information:

"The prospect of environmental science in the sense that without solving environmental problems, the further development of civilization and, as a consequence, the growth of interest in the science of ecology and environmental information is impossible".[15]

Diffusion of environmental information is in various branches of knowledge. If the science of ecology arose on the basis of biology and for a long time was considered a natural science discipline, now the problems of environmental protection are discussed within the

framework of all sciences.

The relevance of environmental information is becoming obsolete very quickly. Since the situation in the world is changing very quickly, environmental information, in order to be in demand, must be constantly updated.

In most cases, environmental information is negative. In particular, we can find such information on the online environmental monitoring of the environment [16]. A similar way of presenting environmental information should, on the one hand, form an active position in people, but on the other, the opposite reaction is often obtained: the belief that the process is irreversible generates environmental pessimism. And as a consequence - the reluctance of people to turn to environmental information, to deal with environmental issues. It is rather a psychological problem, but if the principle of presenting environmental information in a pessimistic way is not changed, society will continue to face the reluctance of the population to use this information.

In the legal literature, there is also such a quality of environmental information as "inconvenience" of environmental information. Very often the interests of "green" organizations and groups of citizens collide with much stronger structures (often state).

Awareness of the need, as a consequence of acquaintance with EI, to abandon many of the benefits of modern civilization, change the position of egocentrism to ecocentrism, about which modern philosophers talk so much.

These features of environmental information are clearly manifested in practice. At the same time, much depends on how and for what purposes we present environmental information.

In particular, according to statistics, in the Uzbekistan in 2020, 2,724 cubic meters of shrubs, 7,812 trees,

including 3,428 valuable and 4,384 rare species of perennial plants, were illegally cut down. In the course of the investigations, law enforcement agencies opened 18 criminal cases, and also seized 127 pieces of tools that were used for felling [17]. In this case, a bias is made towards the educational goal of environmental information.

At the same time, the issue of providing information on natural resources (with the exception of land resources) in the domestic environmental legislation remains unregulated at the proper level and is in dire need of legal regulation, in particular, the issue of providing information on water resources [18].

3. Main Problems

3.1. Theory Analysis

The legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan does not yet contain the concept of "environmental information", but this concept is widely used in national environmental practice due to environmental monitoring and cadastre based on the content of relevant international standards [19].

The following diagram summarizes the main elements of environmental information that make up its content.

In fig. 1 shows the main elements of environmental information that make up its content, consisting of:

1. elements of the environment (natural objects, processes and phenomena);
2. elements of negative impact on the environment (harmful substances, energy, noise, radiation);
3. elements of a substantive response to a negative impact (health and safety of people).

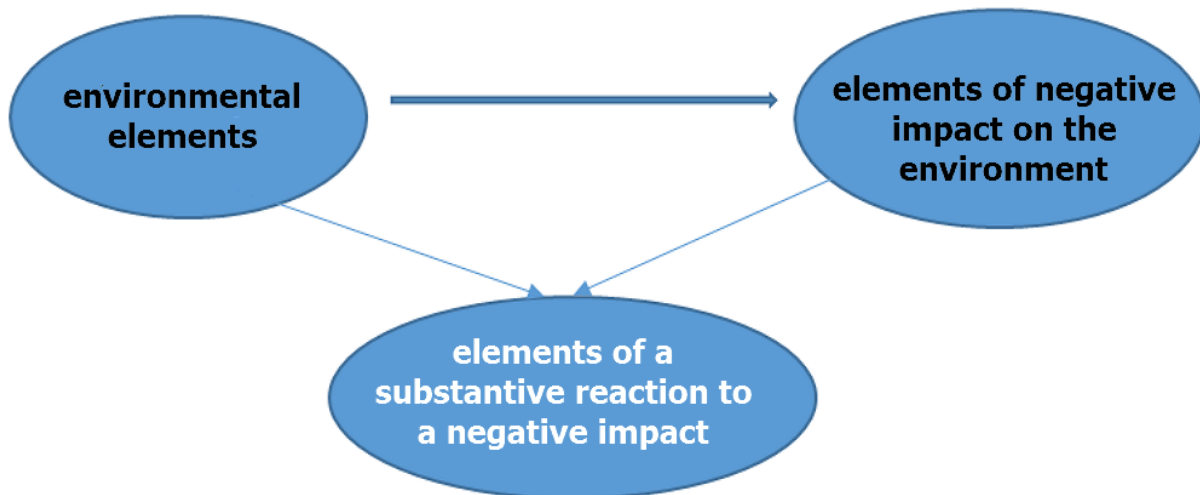


Figure 1. The main elements of environmental information that make up its content

3.2. Fundamentals of International Cooperation in the Field of Environmental Information in the Post-Soviet Space

The basis of international cooperation in the post-Soviet space in the field of information support in the field of ecology and environmental protection was the signing of the Agreement on Information Cooperation in the field of Ecology and Environmental Protection within the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) September 11, 1998 [20].

Within the framework of this Agreement, the following areas of international cooperation were identified:

1. provision of information and methodological activities in the field of exchange and mass dissemination of environmental information, creation of a data bank on the state of the environment, hazardous and other objects related to nature management, scientific and technical developments in the field of ecology and nature protection;
2. information support for the activities of management bodies, departments, enterprises and other organizations of the States parties to this Agreement;
3. exchange of information on transboundary transfers of pollutants, as well as possible transboundary effects of planned activities;
4. promotion of environmental education and education of the population;
5. cooperation and exchange of information with international environmental organizations.

According to this Agreement, the parties form an interstate environmental information system (MEIS) on the basis of existing means of communication and existing structures with environmental information.

The main tasks solved by the parties using the MEIS are:

- rapid dissemination and exchange of environmental information;
- notification and provision of information on environmental emergencies, accidents, catastrophes, movements of hazardous waste;
- exchange of information on animal and plant species listed in the Red Books of the Commonwealth member States;
- preparation and dissemination of annual reports on the state of the natural environment and environmental protection activities in the territories of the Commonwealth member States, informing about research and development works, scientific, technical and innovative programs, advanced environmentally friendly and safe technologies;
- creation and maintenance of an electronic library in the field of environmental protection;
- informational support of measures for the harmonization of environmental legislation of the CIS member states;

- assistance in attracting investments for the implementation of environmental projects.

In the context of globalization, within the framework of international cooperation in the field of environmental protection, the concept of "global environmental information" has been developed, the object of which is the natural resources of the planet, that is, natural objects (body, phenomenon, force) that are not created by man, but without which he cannot exist, either as a living being or as a producer.

Global information about the country's natural resources in accordance with international standards is an integral part of global environmental information as a whole. Currently, the activities of functioning international organizations that engaged in collecting global environmental information are of a general nature, which fundamentally does not meet the requirements of globalization.

It should be noted that with the development of science and technology, natural resources change their meaning: substances and types of energy, the use of which was previously impossible, become natural resources (Sun, wind, sea tides, biofuels, etc.). And in this regard, the existing classification of natural resources into renewable and non-renewable, is conditional, since as a result of merciless human intervention in nature, the properties of some natural resources can change rapidly.

3.3. Why should Uzbekistan join the Aarhus Convention?

Recently, the conventional regulation of environmental activities through the conclusion of contracts and other types of international agreements has become the basis for the implementation of a unified approach of different countries to solving global environmental problems.

The Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention, Aarhus, Denmark, June 25, 1998 - hereinafter the Aarhus Convention), in particular, regulates the issue of ensuring access to environmental information, which is understood as the transmission of this information to environmental information subjects in oral, written and other forms, as well as providing them with the opportunity to search for this information by viewing documents and obtaining copies on the spot or referring to published materials.

At the same time, the objects (sources) of environmental information in the national legislation are the central and local state authorities and management bodies, central branch bodies of state power and management, research and other specialized organizations whose competence includes environmental protection and control over its condition, public health protection, protection of forests, waters, atmosphere, soil, wildlife, use of natural and secondary resources, establishment of rules and standards

in these areas, activities that are potentially dangerous and affect the environment, as well as decision-making, the implementation of which may affect the state of the environment (except for legislative and judicial authorities).

It is gratifying to note that at present we have begun practical work to study the feasibility of the Republic of Uzbekistan's accession to the Aarhus Convention, which was adopted on the basis of the Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, General Assembly resolutions 37/7 of 28 October 1982 on the World Charter for Nature and 45/94 of 14 December 1990 on the need to ensure a healthy environment for the well-being of people, as well as the European Charter on Environment and Health, adopted at the first European Conference "Environment and Health" of the World Health Organization in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, on 8 December 1989.

One of the main priorities of this Convention is to provide consumers with appropriate information about products in order to enable them to make informed choices taking into account the interests of environmental protection.

According to this Convention, all States parties to the Agreement have undertaken to ensure that:

- a) public authorities have environmental information relevant to their functions and update it;
- b) mandatory systems have been established to ensure that information about planned and ongoing activities that may have a significant impact on the environment is properly received by state bodies;
- c) in the event of an impending threat to human health or the environment arising as a result of human activity or for natural reasons, all information that could allow the public to take measures to prevent or mitigate the consequences of damage arising from such a threat

and which is available to the state body, was distributed immediately and without delay to potentially affected members of society.

Each Party also ensures a gradual increase in the volume of environmental information in electronic databases that are easily accessible to the public through public communication networks.

To date, the Convention has been signed by 41 States and ratified by Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Denmark, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Romania, Macedonia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Ukraine.

In the course of studying the issue of the expediency of Uzbekistan's accession to this Convention, in our opinion, the priority should be the question of whether there are positive changes in terms of ensuring access to environmental information for potential nature users.

3.4. Correlation between International and Domestic Legislation

Uzbekistan is the only country in Central Asia that has not yet signed the Aarhus Convention. At the same time, Uzbekistan is working to create a Common Environmental Information System (SEIS) by implementing the principles of SEIS and its three main components: content, infrastructure and cooperation. Uzbekistan participates in the activities of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment and the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), which support the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia in establishing SEIS by 2021.

On the basis of expert opinion, in 2018, the progress of SEIS implementation in Uzbekistan was analyzed and cases of inconsistency of national legislation with its principles were identified, as reflected in table 2 [21].

Table 1. The objects (sources) of environmental information in the national legislation

No.	Forms of environmental information	Sources of environmental information	bodies providing information
1.	electronic	state cadastre	State authorities
2.	written	National report and reports on the state of the environment and the use of natural resources	State authorities
3.	electronic	state environmental monitoring data	State authorities and administration
4.	written	materials of environmental impact assessment and state ecological expertise;	State authorities and administration
5.	orally	nature user	Individuals and legal entities
6.	written	public organizations	self-government bodies, non-governmental non-profit environmental organizations
7.	written, electronic, orally	other materials and documents containing environmental information	State authorities and administration, nature user, public

Table 2. State of implementation of the principles SEIS in national legislation

No.	SEIS principles	National legislation (+ \ -)
1.	Processed at a level as close as possible to its source	+
2.	Collected only once and made available to other users for a variety of different purposes	-
3.	Be readily available to facilitate compliance with reporting obligations	-
4.	Be easily accessible to all users	-
5.	Be available for comparison at appropriate geographic scales and for citizen participation	-
6.	Be fully accessible to the public, at the national level in the respective national languages	+
7.	Supported by open source free software	-

To fully identify gaps in the law in the implementation of SEIS principles we conducted a comparative analysis of Article 4 of the Aarhus Convention and such existing legislative norms as the Civil Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan; Laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan: "On appeals of individuals and legal entities", "On the State Land Cadastre", "On principles and guarantees of freedom of information", "On electronic government", "On the protection of state secrets", "On waste", "On the protection of atmospheric air", "On the protection of personal data", Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On lifting restrictions on the official publication of certain data" dated February 1, 2019 No. 77, Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On determining the procedure for the use of agricultural lands of land and cadastral information placement on the official websites of ministries and departments and local government bodies" dated July 17, 2019 No. 599, REGULATION on the Unified Portal of interactive public services of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Approved by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of September 15, 2017 No. 728, the Resolution of the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Land Resources, Geodesy, Cartography and State Cadastre "On approval of the regulations on the procedure for providing land and cadastral information", the Resolution of the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Nature Protection "On approval of the regulations on the Red Book of the Republic of Uzbekistan", during which some gaps in the current legislation were identified, the elimination of which, in our opinion, will allow further improvement of the mechanism of functioning of the information block in the implementation of the country's environmental policy.

3.4. What is interesting about the Uzbek experience in the formation of environmental information for other countries?

Noting the insufficient development of the legislative framework for the formation of environmental information in Uzbekistan, I would like to dwell on some positive practical steps taken in this area, in particular, in the area of improving environmental monitoring.

So, in 2019, a project was launched in Uzbekistan to automate the monitoring of atmospheric air pollution, which is being implemented by the Center for Hydrometeorological Service with the support of the Zamin Foundation and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). It is noted that today the first stage of the project has been implemented, within which 63 observation points are combined into a single analytical center. Monitoring results are posted on the public online platform monitoring.meteo.uz and in the AirUz mobile application.

The second stage provides for the installation of automatic air monitoring stations throughout the country and the adoption of international air monitoring standards. The third stage of the project provides for the integration of monitoring results into the Unified Geoinformation Database of the environmental monitoring system of the republic and international information systems.

This database provides for the collection, storage, processing and analysis of data provided by specially authorized state bodies and business entities that conduct production monitoring of the environment.

4. Research Results

In particular, *firstly*, the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Electronic Government" defines the concept of "request" as "the applicant's request, sent by him to state bodies, for the provision of public services", while the applicant can be an individual or a legal entity. And in the law "On appeals of individuals and legal entities", the concept of "electronic appeal" is given and its main types are distinguished - an application, a proposal, a complaint. As can be seen from the above norms, "request" and "appeal" are two different concepts, but in the norms on the provision of environmental information (Resolution of the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Land Resources, Geodesy, Cartography and State Cadastre "On approval of the regulations on the procedure for providing land cadastral information to interested legal entities and individuals"), they are used as synonymous concepts.

In our opinion, these concepts should differ by subjects and objects. The subject of the request should be only the

competent authority, which is endowed with state authority, while the subject of the request is only individuals and legal entities. The need for a subjective separation of these concepts is also dictated by the fact that information is provided to the competent authorities free of charge, and to individuals and legal entities – on a paid basis.

The object of the request is only specific information, while the object of the appeal is a wide range of constitutional rights and freedoms and the possibility of protecting violated rights. Such a distinction between a request and a request will fully meet the requirements of the Aarhus Convention and will consolidate guarantees for access to environmental information.

Secondly, our legislation does not detail such grounds for refusing to provide environmental information as encroachments on international relations, national defense or State security; the administration of justice, the possibility for persons to be subjected to a fair trial or the ability of state bodies to conduct criminal or disciplinary investigations; confidentiality of commercial and industrial information in cases where such confidentiality is protected by law in order to protect legitimate economic interests. I would especially like to note that the current national restrictive norms are only general in nature and are characterized by such general phrases as "causing damage to the rights and legitimate interests of the individual, the interests of society and the state". Such ambiguous vague formulations may be the basis for different interpretations and applications of the law, which will restrict access to environmental information;

Thirdly, considering the needs of the digital economy, the function of providing environmental information should be included in the Unified Register of Electronic Public Services, thus ensuring the possibility of obtaining environmental information about the country's natural resources through "Electronic government". Since 2015, the "electronic government" system has been operating in Uzbekistan, to which all state authorities and management bodies are connected. Submitting a request for information about natural resources by a public authority through this network will make it much easier to obtain the required information, especially since it is provided free of charge.

Fourth, the tariffs of the rates at which fees may be charged for providing information on natural resources should be made public, indicating the circumstances that provide for the collection of fees or exempt them from payment, and cases when information is provided subject to the advance payment of such a fee. As a general rule, the provision of environmental information on a paid basis is carried out only to individuals and legal entities, while the grounds and subjects of exemption from paying the cost of information are not fixed in the legislation.

It should be noted that the creation of the Cadastre Agency under the Tax Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan is an important step for further improving the mechanism for the formation and provision of

environmental information, but at the same time, the true independence of the cadastral authority from the governing bodies and authorities, in our opinion, will be ensured only if it is linked with law enforcement agencies.

These and other imperfections of the national legislation allowed us to develop the following proposals aimed at ensuring the intensity of the process of implementing international standards in the field of access to environmental information.

5. Conclusions

Firstly, it is necessary to develop a draft convention "On global environmental information", the purpose of which will be to collect, store, update and provide global information about the natural resources of the planet, based on the national environmental databases of the participating countries. To do this, on the basis of the Center for Collecting Information on National Environmental Legislation of the International Union for Conservation of Nature, it is necessary to create a Center for collecting information about the natural resources of the planet, where all participating states would send quantitative and qualitative data about their natural resources, their condition, in short, all the necessary information, except for information related to state secrets of the participating countries. We mean information that reveals the results of topographic, geodetic or cartographic activities that have important defense or economic significance. The importance of creating such a project cannot be overestimated. If there is a Center for collecting information on natural resources, a constantly updated and updated database on the state of natural resources of any state will be available to current and future generations, which will allow the world community to participate more widely in the decision-making process on the use of natural resources, increase the level of responsibility of States for irrational and wasteful use of natural resources, make this process transparent and, in general, will meet all the requirements of the Aarhus Convention.

Secondly, in order to harmonize the norms of domestic legislation with the requirements of international norms on the provision of environmental information, we offer:

1. Adopt the law "On Environmental Information", which provides for the concept and types of environmental information and information resources, regulates the right of access to environmental information and its restrictions, the formation and maintenance of state environmental information resources, objects and subjects of environmental information, the procedure for providing environmental information, the procedure for forming tariffs for the provision of environmental information, international cooperation in the field of environmental information exchange and liability for violation of legislation;

2. State part 5 of Article 3 of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Electronic Government" in the following wording:

"The applicant is a competent authority with state-governmental powers, who has applied to a state body with a request";

3. Supplement the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On appeals of individuals and legal entities" with Article 51:

"Article 51. Objects of the request. The objects of appeal of individuals and legal entities are the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests, as well as the protection of violated rights, recommendations for improving state and public activities."

In conclusion, we would like to note that all the necessary prerequisites have been created in Uzbekistan today to strengthen and more clearly consolidate the role of the information block of public administration in the field of ecology and environmental protection, and its harmonization with the requirements of international law is an important guarantee for solving regional environmental problems. In this connection, the availability of reliable global information on the state of natural resources will be a fundamental factor in ensuring the ecological security of the planet and determining the main directions of the environmental policy of the country, the region and the world as a whole, and will also contribute to the development of the theory of interaction between nature and human society based on a new view that considers human society as an integral part of the biosphere.

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