

# **Environmental Information Management: A Key to Sustainable Urban Governance?**

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## **Central Research Questions of Interest**

- 1. How does local government manage environmental information?**
- 2. How does environmental information management feed into environmental policymaking?**
- 3. Does environmental information management predict environmental innovation and outcomes ('best performers')?**

# **Some Underlying Premises and Concepts**

**1. Environmental information management:** How and WHY is environmental information produced, consumed, used and disseminated by local authorities?

How – if at all – is environmental information utilized for risk assessment and amelioration, strategic planning?

How – if at all – is environmental information integrated into policymaking?

## Some Underlying Premises and Concepts

2. **Governance for sustainability:** focus on one central component of sustainable development as based on “...*full information, an open public discourse, and stakeholder dialogues at all levels...*” (EU Consultative Forum on Environment and Sustainable Development, 2000) – i.e. transparency, dissemination, public access to environmental information.

How does transparency “work”? Social agents, who interact in policy networks and use transparent information (among others) to exert joint pressure on polluters to change their behavior.

## **Basic Premises and Concepts**

### **3. Urban Governance:**

- a. Cities as multiple sources of emissions and of the diffusion of emissions across space and time**
- b. Local government as a potential site for ‘flexible governance’ and environmental innovation**

## **Two Studies of Environmental Information Management and Urban Governance in Israel**

- ❑ Survey of environmental administrators in ALL 172 cities, towns and regional authorities in Israel (87% response rate, 50% in Arab local authorities)**
- ❑ In-depth interviews with ALL relevant officials in twelve select local authorities (from mayors on down)**

# Survey Questions

**Collection of environmental information: issues? sources?  
frequency? cumulative database?**

**Utilization and dissemination of environmental information: use for  
what? dissemination to whom? conditions and restrictions?**

**Local environmental risks**

**LEI**

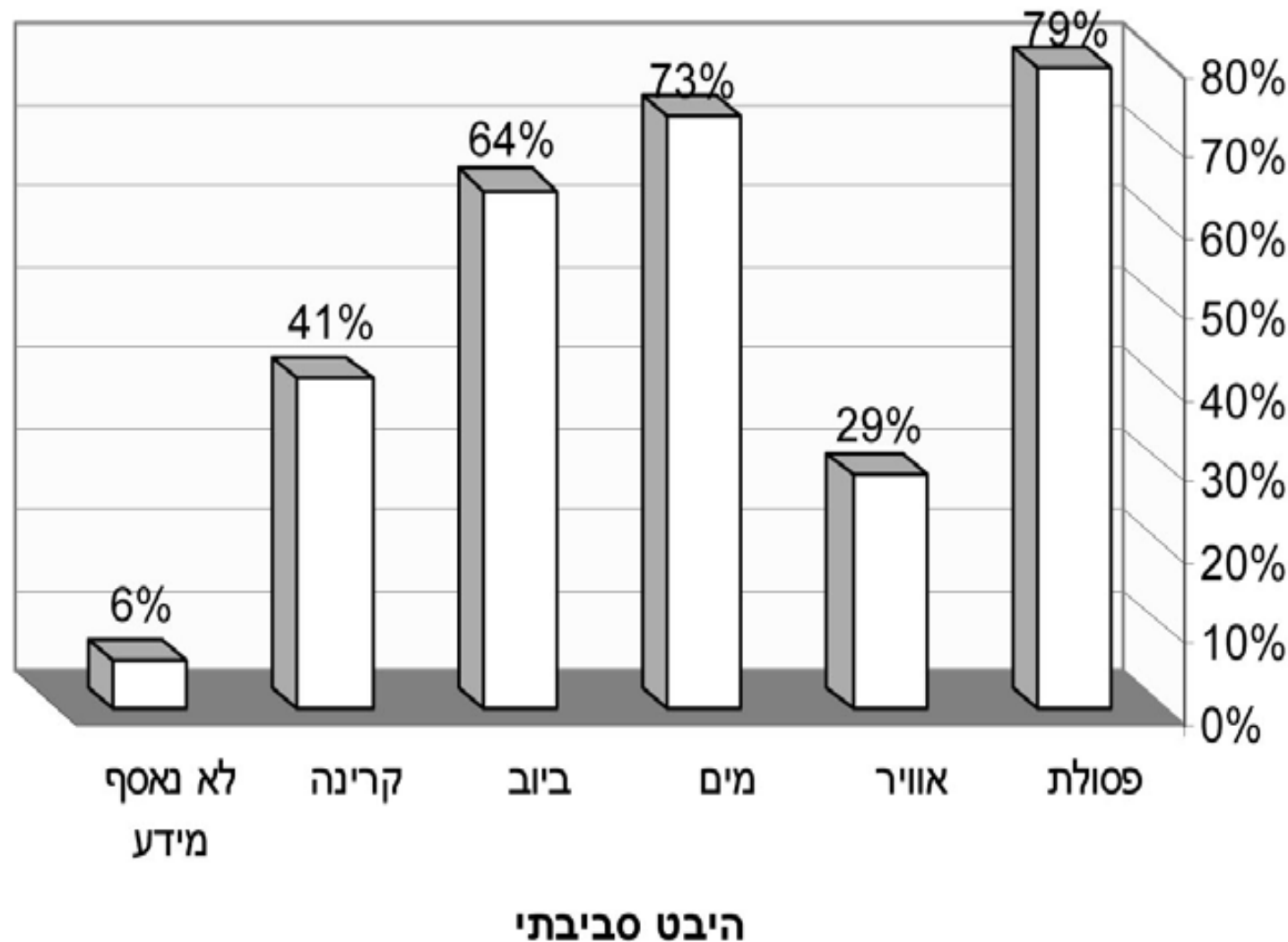
**Compliance and 'beyond compliance'**

**Involvement of NGOs and local residents (planning, decision-making...**

**Networking and cooperation: with whom? to what purpose?**

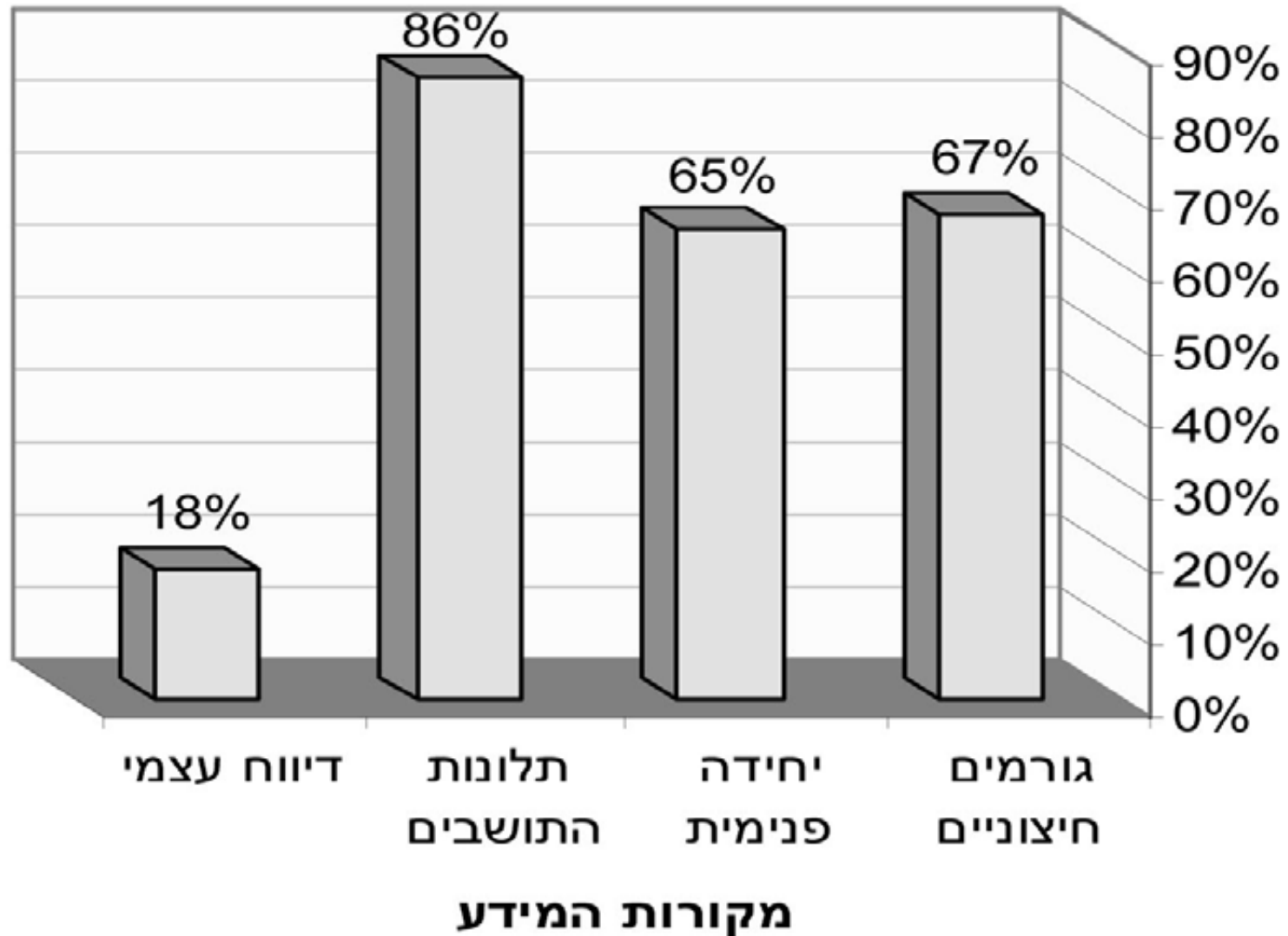
**Community-level data (control variables): population, sector, SES,  
social capital, peripherality**

# FIG 1. Collection of Environmental Information: Issues



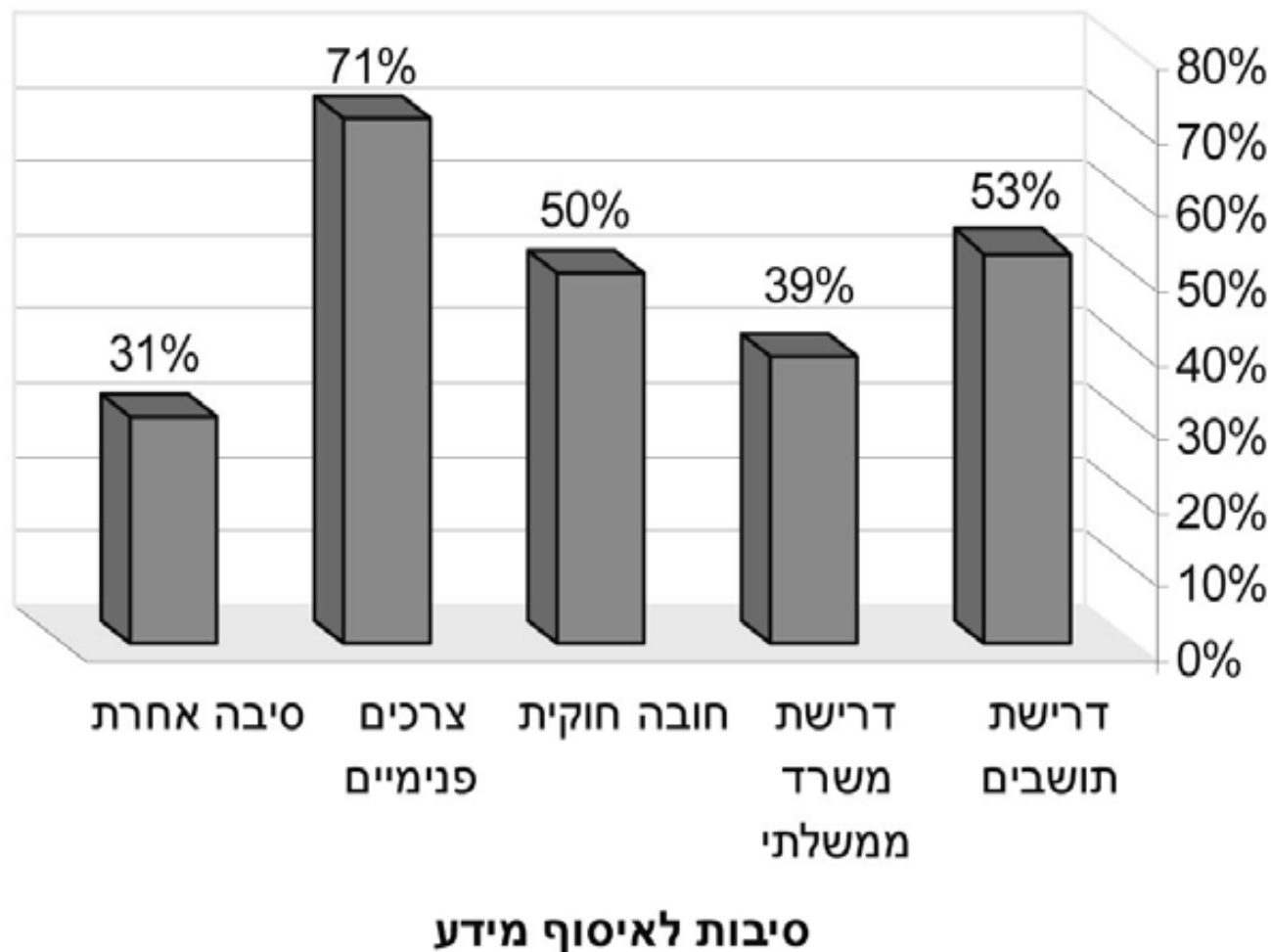


**FIG 2. Collection of Environmental Information: Sources**

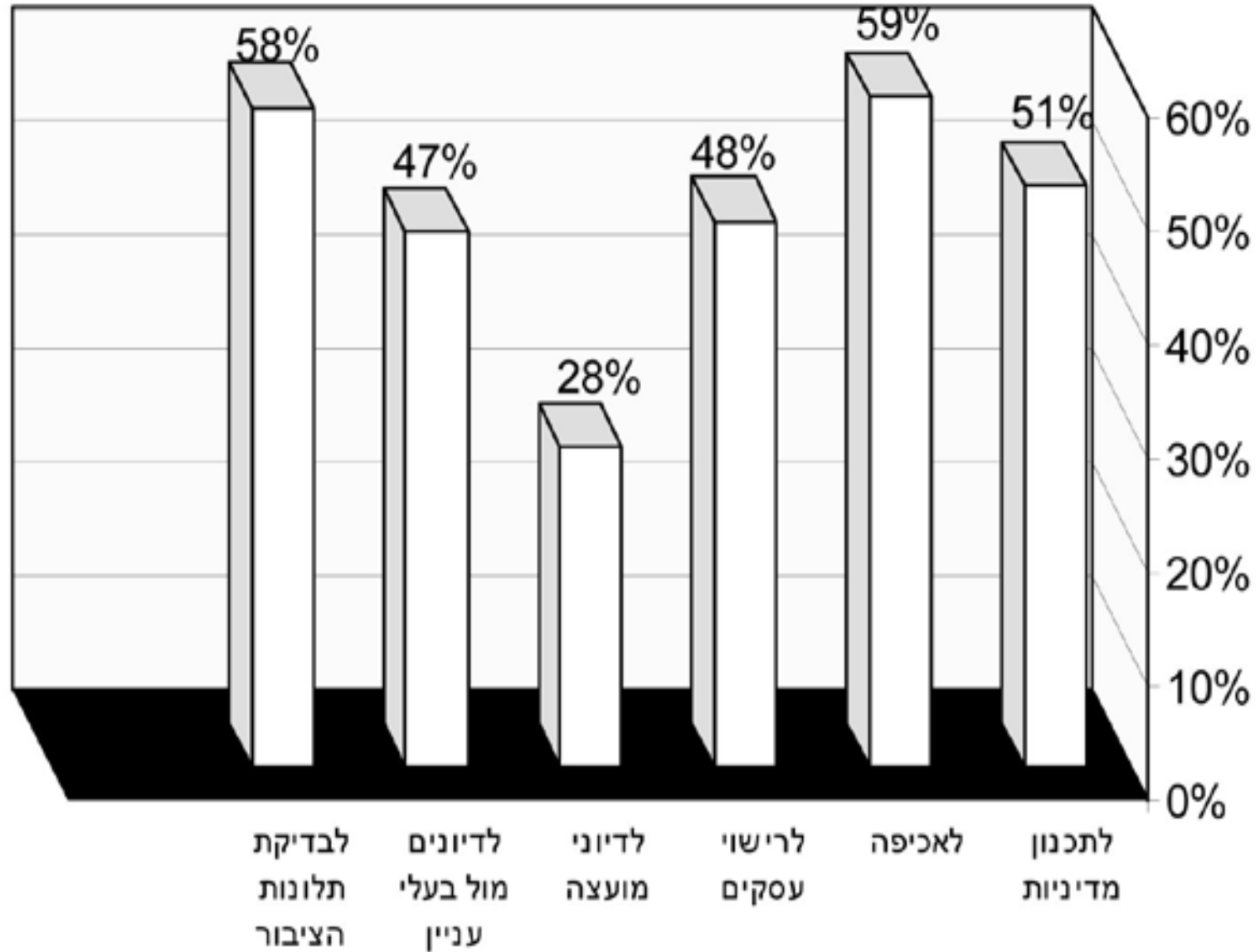


# FIG 3. Collection of Environmental Information: Reasons

תרשים 11. התפלגות הסיבות לאיסוף מידע סביבתי ברשויות

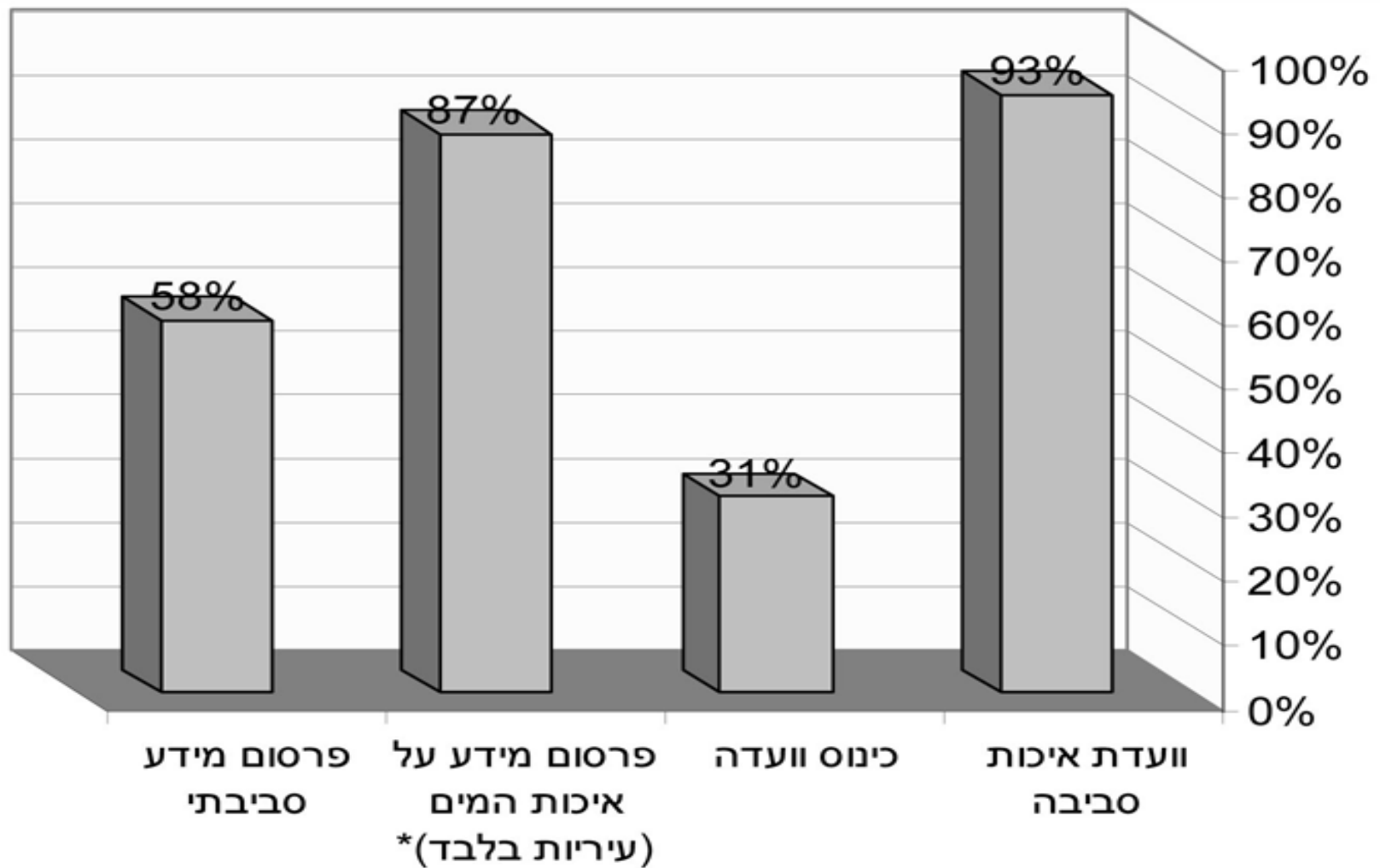


**FIG 4. Use of Environmental Information: What for?**



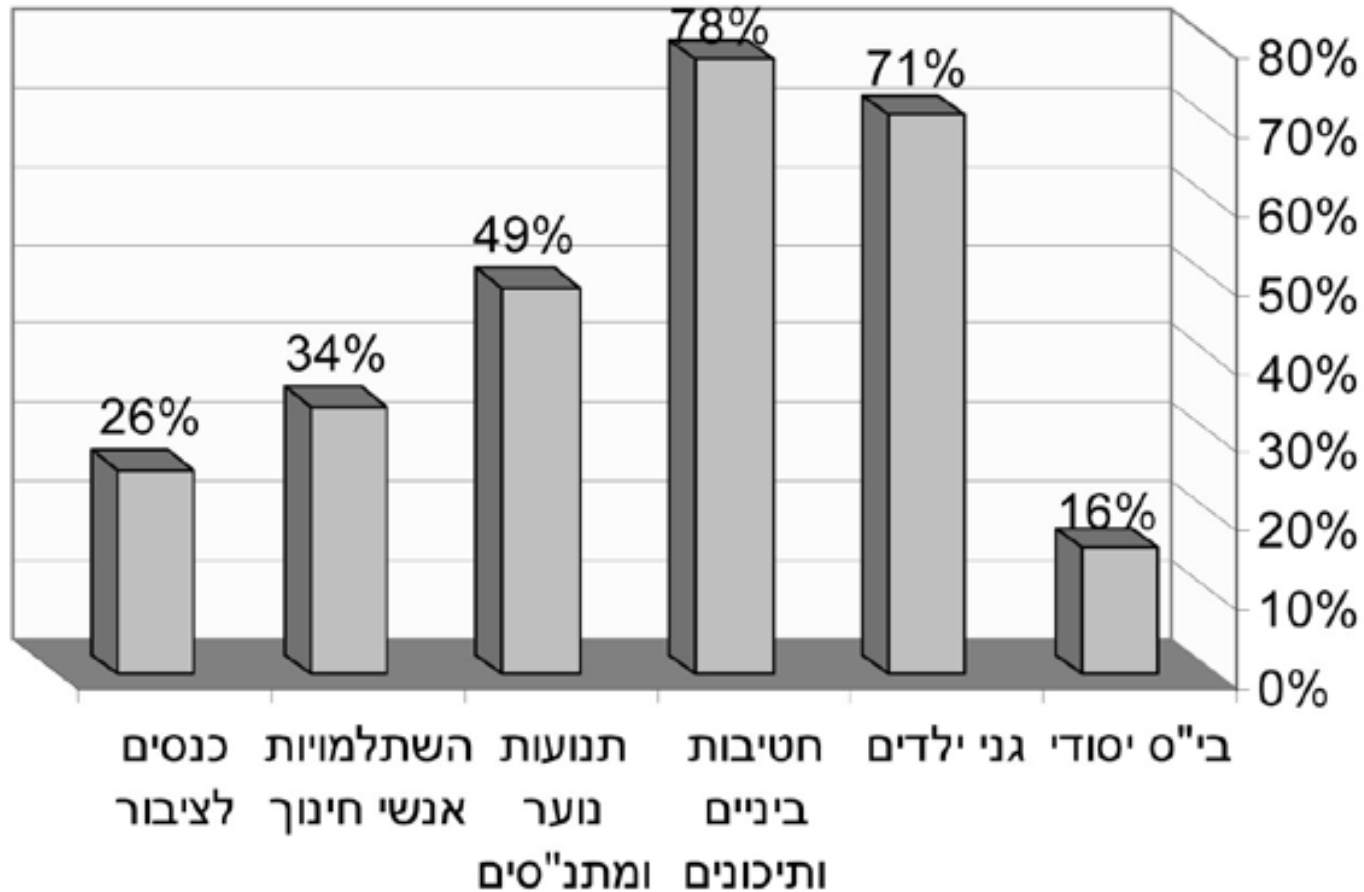
# FIG 5. Compliance with Environmental Legislation

תרשים 8. ציות לחוק של הרשויות בארבעה תחומים סביבתיים



## FIG 6. 'Beyond Compliance': Mostly Restricted to Educational Initiatives

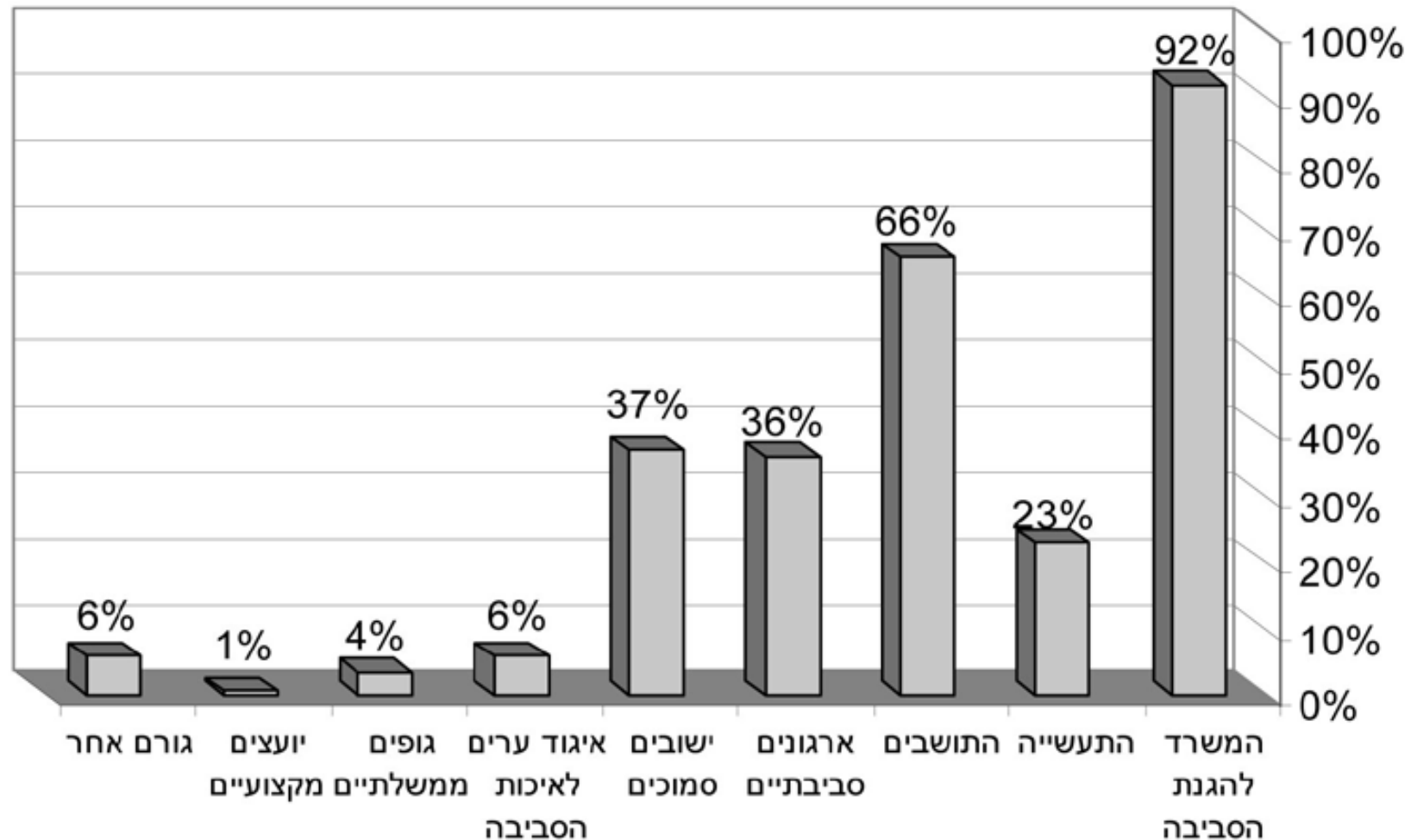
תרשים 16. סוגי הפעילויות הסביבתיות של הרשויות במסגרת ציבוריות-חינוכיות



פעילויות סביבתיות במסגרת ציבורית-חינוכית

# FIG 7. Networks and Cooperation: With Whom?

תרשים 19. שיתופי פעולה של הרשויות עם גורמים אחרים



## **What does it all mean? – Much ado about nothing?**

- ❖ **No evidence that numerous activities of collecting, disseminating and using environmental information constitute *environmental information management* – the judicious use of information in local environmental monitoring, enforcement, policy, planning, blueprinting strategies for sustainable development.**
- ❖ **No evidence that local authorities focus collection of information on the extent and severity of environmental risks in their jurisdiction.**
- ❖ **No evidence that considerable extent of activities and initiatives beyond compliance are directed at improving environmental performance: e.g. energy conservation, preservation of ‘green lungs’, etc.**

# Why do local authorities collect, use and disseminate information?

## Why do they perform beyond compliance?

### Predictors:

- ✓ **Size matters**
- ✓ **Resident interest and involvement**
- ✓ **NGO involvement**
- ✓ **Networks of cooperation** (especially with other local authorities)



# Preliminary Findings From Qualitative In-Depth Study

**Networks** of local authorities are held responsible for **FUTURE** mitigation of air pollution and reduction of **GHG** emissions:

- **Forum of 15 'Independent Cities' (+ 3)**
- **Association of Regional Authorities**

**Thanks for your attention**