A checklist for HIA: experiences and challenges

Pilot project: *focus on health in EIA procedures*

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Background of the project

- EU SEA guidelines (2001)
- UN/ECE SEA protocol (2003)
- Dutch action programme on Health & Environment (2002-2006)

Action point 7: MOH and MOE stimulate consideration of health in decision-making. Connection is sought with existing types of assessment such as EIA and SEA.

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Why this example?

- In the PEP - Tblisi workshop 2006 the question was raised if a general checklist for HIA could be developed.
- The checklist “focus on health in EIA procedures” is a promising example of looking systematically at possible impacts on health in the initial stage of spatial planning.
- It is a webbased tool that is easy to use and to adapt to different local circumstances and priorities.
Objectives of the project

- Broadly available digital tool for local government and other involved parties with attention to environment related health determinants, social determinants, life style and access to care.
- A tool that promotes support for:
  - Attention to a wide range of health impacts in the EIA/SEA procedure
  - Cooperation between local government and environmental health specialists
What does the tool offer?

- Helps to identify impacts on health determinants
- Through questions supported by help texts
- Report of possible health impacts
- Stimulates discussion and cooperation between project initiators and authorities on possible health impacts
Two level tool

- **Screening level**: local governments / initiators (general questions)

- **Scoping level**: Commission for Environmental Impact Assessment (general and detailed questions)

*Level to be selected at the start of the checklist*
Topics addressed

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Signifying:

- Environmental factors: noise, odour, air, water and soil pollution, vibrations, radiation
- External safety
- Traffic safety
- Composition of the population
- Work, education, and income
- Physical exercise and sport
- Recreation
- Access to care and care utilisation

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How does it look (1): project selection

Types of projects

• SEA project
• Housing
• Transport
• Industry
• Recreation

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Sample question on air pollution road traffic + additional information

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Summary of answers on traffic pollution with colour codes

- Red: deterioration
- Green: improvement
- Yellow: no change
- Blue: unknown, to be studied

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Pilots:

- The tool was tested in:
  - One “live” project in the screening phase of SEA procedure: *NET Flevoland*: Three different alternative locations were assessed with different subgroups of initiators.
  - Three projects in the scoping phase: Possible health impacts were assessed with the tool by 3 different subcommittees of the EIA commission.

- After the pilots the tool will be adapted on the basis of process and product evaluation outcomes.
Preliminary results

• According to all users the checklist certainly has added value in incorporating broader health impacts in EIA procedure.
• The checklist promotes discussion in the initial stage between initiators and local authorities from different backgrounds on assessing priorities and health impacts in particular, which is commonly highly appreciated.
• It is difficult to formulate questions unambiguous and understandable for all users. Also attention has to be given to the quality of additional information.
• The checklist still lacks clear references to quantitative tools that can give more detailed information on subjects reported as important to be analysed in more detail.
Relevance for transport?

- Structural assessment of health impacts is difficult to attain but the instrument can add to a mentality change.
- The tool has proven to be a practical instrument to integrate possible broader health impacts in the EIA procedure.
- The tool is easily adaptable to focus specifically on health impacts of transport.
- The tool provides an answer to the need for systematic discussion about broader health impacts in the initial planning stage.
- Starting by using the tool systematically in the scoping phase is a more promising approach than involving stakeholders in the screening phase.