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Learning from practice
Case studies of health in
Strategic Environmental Assessment and
Environmental Impact Assessment
across the
WHO European Region

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ABSTRACT

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Learning from practice. Case studies of health in Strategic Environmental Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment across the WHO European Region

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Executive summary

This report investigates how human health is interpreted and covered in Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) within the WHO European Region.

The report is intended for practitioners from environmental, health and planning sectors at all levels of governments. It can also support inter-governmental processes related to relevant conventions and protocols. This report does not discuss basic terminology in impact assessment.

The primary research question addressed was: How are statutory EIA (post implementation of the 2014 EU EIA Directive) and SEA (post 2010 or later ratification of the Protocol on SEA) requirements for the coverage of human health interpreted and expressed through practices across countries?

A key aim is to identify SEA and EIA cases that go beyond a narrow interpretation of human health, and that do not only focus on bio-physical determinants of health, but that also consider wider social, economic and / or behavioural aspects.

The work comprises a search for SEA and EIA reports that address human health.

A systematic internet review was undertaken to identify SEA and EIA reports. The search covered all 53 countries of the WHO European Region in the main official languages of each country. A total of 333 candidate case studies were identified and translated using Google Translate™. Cases were purposively selected to reflect good practice for the coverage of health in SEA and EIA across a range of countries, sectors and scales of proposal. Overall, around 10% of the candidate cases showed a 'broad' social determinants of health interpretation of health within the assessments, i.e. assessing social and economic drivers of health, as well as environmental factors. Another 10% provided definitions of health that acknowledged wider determinants.

12 case studies were written up: six SEAs and six EIAs.

SEA case studies have been written up in this report for Estonia, England, France, the Republic of Ireland, Belgium and Sweden. The relevance of the EU SEA Directive 2001/42/EC and the Protocol on SEA to the Convention on EIA in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention), hereafter the 'Protocol on SEA', is noted in each case. Case studies cover spatial plan making at municipal and neighbourhood scales, regional waste policy and national transport plan making.

EIA case studies have been written up in this report for Portugal, Georgia, Lithuania, Finland, Hungary and Ireland. The relevance of the EU EIA Directive 2014/52/EU is noted in each case. Case studies cover transport; energy; industry and urban development.

The case studies presented show current practice examples for both SEA and EIA of a wider determinants of health approach being taken across countries and across sectors for both public and private sector proposals.

The case studies identified indicate that SEA and EIA practice and guidance relating to the coverage of human health that considers health inequalities, healthy lifestyles, safe and cohesive

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communities, socioeconomic conditions, environmental conditions and/or health- and social-care services would be consistent with current practice.

The work also comprises a literature review on the consideration of health in SEA and EIA. A search was made of academic databases and 35 articles were identified.

The case studies and the literature review clearly demonstrate that SEAs and EIAs can take a broad, wider determinants of health, definition of human health within their scoping and assessment.

Such an approach is consistent with:

- the objective of the EU EIA Directive which is to “*ensure a high level of protection of the environment and of human health*”;
- the EU Directive on SEA, which states that “*policy on the environment is to contribute to, inter alia, the preservation, protection and improvement of the quality of the environment, [and] the protection of human health...*”; and
- the emphasis on health under the UNECE Protocol on SEA, including the objective that “*environmental, including health, considerations are thoroughly taken into account in the development of plans and programmes*”.

It also supports good practice in relation to the undefined requirement for health assessment:

- The EIA Directive requires assessment of “*the direct and indirect significant effects of a project on... human health*”; and
- The SEA Directive requires assessment of “*the likely significant effects [including secondary effects] on the environment, including on issues such as... human health*”,

EU Directive SEA and EIA requirements relate to health being considered its own right as a factor affected by the proposal and in terms of the interaction between health, population and listed environmental factors. There is debate within practice as to whether a narrow or broad interpretation of health is appropriate within SEA and EIA. The case studies presented show that a broad approach is successfully being taken by current practice in a range of countries, sectors and scales of proposal.

The broad interpretation of health approach provides decision makers with information on how health is affected directly by environmental change, and indirectly by the social and economic consequences of environmental change.

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Case studies: health in SEA Reports

Belgium

Strategisch-MER Verbeteren van de leefbaarheid voor de bewoners van de woonwijk Klein-Rusland (Zelzate). Ontwerptekst

[Strategic EIA Improving the quality of life for the residents of the residential area Klein-Russia (Zelzate). Draft text]

<http://gentsekanaalzone.be/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/smerKR.pdf>

on 22nd February 2021.

Estonia

Põlva valla üldplaneeringu keskkonnamõju strateegiline hindamine

[Strategic Environmental Assessment of Põlva municipality master plan]

www.polva.ee/documents/17842760/19108887/P6lvaYP_LISA2_KSHA_20092017.pdf/1633df86-2835-47e1-bc5f-c6468208a24a

on 22nd February 2021.

France

Projet de plan regional de prevention et gestion des dechets - rapport environnementale

[Île-de-France Regional Plan for the Prevention and Management of Waste SEA]

www.versaillesgrandparc.fr/fileadmin/user_upload/99_DE-D3210_DELIB_D20190412_ENVcridf_PRPGD_20190402ANX12.PDF

on 22nd February 2021.

Ireland

North Lotts & Grand Canal Dock Planning Scheme SEA Environmental Report (Dublin)

www.dublindocklands.ie/sites/default/files/Planning/Environmental%20Report.pdf

on 22nd February 2021.

Sweden

Miljökonsekvensbeskrivning av förslag till Nationell plan för transportsystemet 2018-2029

[Environmental impact statement of proposals for the National Plan for the transport system 2018-2029]

https://trafikverket.ineko.se/Files/en-US/31299/Ineko.Product.RelatedFiles/2017_167_miljokonsekvensbeskrivning_av_forslag_till_nationell_plan_for_transportsystemet_2018_2029.pdf

on 22nd February 2021.

United Kingdom

Hull Local Plan SEA inclusive Sustainability Appraisal

<http://www.hull.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/policies-and-plans/local-plan>

on 22nd February 2021.

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Case studies: health in EIA Reports

Finland

Puutionsaaren tuulivoimapuiston yleiskaava ja ympäristövaikutusten arviointi

[Puumsaari Wind Power Park]

www.haapavesi.fi/sites/haapavesi.fi/files/liitetiedostot/Haapaveden%20Puutionsaaren_tuulipuiston_YK_YVA_SELOSTUS_EHDOTUSVAIHE_07122020.pdf

on 22nd February 2021.

Georgia

Section F4 of the Khevi-Ubisa-Shoropani-Argveta Road (E60 Highway)

www.georoad.ge/uploads/files/main.pdf

on 22nd February 2021.

Hungary

BMW közútgépjármű-gyártó üzem Debrecen Környezeti Hatástanulmány

[BMW road vehicle manufacturer plant Debrecen Environmental Impact Assessment]

www.kormanyhivatal.hu/download/7/b4/05000/BMW_kornyezeti_hatastanulmany.pdf

on 22nd February 2021.

Ireland

Mixed Use Development - Opera Site

www.limerick.ie/sites/default/files/media/documents/2019-03/Opera_Site_Environmental_Impact_Assessment_Report.pdf

on 22nd February 2021.

Lithuania

Vėjo elektrinių parko Šilutės r. sav. Juknaičių sen., Domaičių k. įrengimo poveikio aplinkai vertinimo ataskaita

[Wind farm in Silute d. sav. Juknaičiai sen., Domaičių village. Environmental impact assessment report for the installation]

https://infraplanas.lt/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Silute_SV-projektai_PAV-Ataskaita-4.pdf

on 22nd February 2021.

Portugal

Ligação do Interface Rodoferroviário / EN14 (Santana), incluindo Nova Ponte sobre o Rio Ave

[Connection of the road-rail / EN14 Interface (Santana), including a new bridge over the Rio Ave]

https://siaia.apambiente.pt/AIADOC/AIA3267/en14_pb_011_eia_rs_0201931916756.pdf

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