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Additional information provided by Switzerland regarding the consideration of health issues in transboundary environmental impact assessment upon request by the secretariat

Health is indeed not dealt with “explicitly” in the EIA Reports, that is in a separate and dedicated chapter. This explains the answer given in the questionnaire.

In Switzerland EIA is regulated in the “Environmental Protection Law” (Loi sur la protection de l’environnement, LPE). According to Art. 1 Para. 1, this law is intended, among other things, to protect humans, animals and plants, their biotic communities and habitats against harmful and nuisance impacts. Impacts are harmful if they damage human life or physical or mental health. Combating harmful effects should therefore contribute to preserving the health of both humans, animals and plants. Consequently, the Environmental Protection Law and its related EIA instrument are intended to protect health.

In fact, the regulations to be respected (values / thresholds), among else in the areas of noise (OPB), air (OPAir), radiation (ORNI), contaminated sites (OSites), groundwater protection (LEaux), protection against major accidents (OPAM), etc. are essentially based on criteria related to the protection of human health. The protection of biodiversity (LPN), forest (LFo) and water resources (LEaux) are also closely linked to human health.

It can also be added that this law also seeks to combat merely annoying effects. The aim is to prevent disturbances to well-being. Well-being means a state of physical and mental equilibrium; well-being is experienced by those who are productive, enjoy life and have a feeling of being undisturbed. Among other things, well-being serves as a criterion for limiting noise, vibration and odour immissions.