

**Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment
Eighth meeting (Geneva, 26–28 November 2019)**

Item 7. (a) Exchange of good practices: Workshop on the assessment of health impacts and health sector involvement in strategic environmental assessment

Conclusions and feedback from the workshop

1. There are variations of how health is currently approached in SEA in different countries and systems (there are also variations on how SEA is approached). Today's discussion has reflected experiences of those countries that currently have a wider approach to health, in particular with regards to the consideration of social and behavioural aspects as well as well-being next to the biophysical environment.
2. Health and SEA practitioners need to be able to develop an understanding for each other; having time to develop a dialogue will be important; ideally, joint environmental and health forces should be developed
3. How monitoring should happen is a challenge and case study experiences are required to show how this can be done.
4. There is great importance for involving health authorities at the scoping stage. Scoping needs to focus on those aspects that are relevant; a proportional approach is needed. Everything that is decided on during the scoping stage will feed through to the rest of the SEA process (analysis, reporting, follow-up, consultation and participations).
5. Health in SEA ambassadors / strategic advocates are of great importance for creating effective SEA.
6. Health authorities, through impact assessments they do and through taking part in SEAs, can inform SEA: SEA should aim at using data that are collected anyway (also for monitoring purposes) but can add important data for collection that the SEA found to be important.
7. Capacity building / developing skills on what health in SEA means is a vital element for creating an effective health in SEA 'system'; this is likely to focus on the wider definition of health.
8. Health assessment has a positive outlook whilst SEA traditionally focuses more on mitigating (negative) environmental impacts; both can learn from each other.
9. When you consider sustainable long-term effects, you need to take the broader health determinants on board; in the workshop practical examples were provided on how to do that.
10. Countering impact assessment 'fatigue' (e.g. due to having to do too many assessments) through integration in SEA can be positive. However, in this context, it is important to have a set of clear set of rules, so that all aspects are actually adequately considered.
11. Presenting complex information about health and well-being in a simple way is important. The Dutch example of an impact wheel was positively noted.
12. The example of social impact assessment was discussed. It was agreed that in some cases additional impact assessment, for example social impact assessment, may be prepared separate to SEA. Preparing a separate IA may be considered desirable in order to avoid integrating too many topics into SEA and impeding its effectiveness. It was also noted that there are currently no legal obligations for social impact assessment, but countries are free to introduce it.