

# Supporting decision-making through HIA

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## **Supporting decision-making: what is it?**

**Results of the HIA and the suggestions arising from it are provided to politicians and other decision-makers responsible for taking decisions about the proposal and its implementation – known as primary decision-makers**

## **Supporting decision-making: why do it?**

- **To provide primary decision-makers with information about a proposal's potential impacts on health and well-being**
- **To help primary decision-makers protect and improve the health of their population by making suggestions about possible ways to change a proposal and/or the way it is implemented**

## Supporting decision-making: who does it?

### Presenting the HIA results to primary decision-makers

Any of the following could be involved:

- HIA Assessor or HIA Assessment Team
- Steering Group
- Senior manager(s) from organisations involved in the HIA

## **Supporting decision-making: when is it done?**

- **After appraisal**
- **After the Steering Group has agreed the contents of the report**

## Supporting decision-making through HIA: how is it done?

- **Present primary decision-makers with the results after appraisal**
- **Engage with primary decision-makers throughout the HIA process – it may increase the likelihood that suggestions will be acted upon**

## **Supporting decision-making: preparation**

- **Identify the relevant primary decision-makers – done mainly during Scoping, and but also at Screening**
- **Find out the timescale for the decision-making process about the proposal, and any relevant milestones in that process**

## **Supporting decision-making: identifying decision-makers**

**It is important to be aware there may be more than one group of decision-makers:**

- **Politicians in local government**
- **Senior managers in private, public and voluntary sector organisations involved in the HIA**
- **Proposal proponents, e.g. private sector developers**
- **Decision-makers in other organisations who may have to take decisions because the proposal has implications for the services they provide – secondary decision-makers**



## **Supporting decision-making: identifying the decision-making process for the proposal**

- **Different types of proposal may have different decision-making processes**
- **Some proposals may have public consultation periods associated with them – it can be helpful to hold the appraisal stage at this time**

# Supporting decision-making: context analysis

**It is important to assess:**

- **priorities of the primary decision-makers;**
- **where health comes among their priorities;**
- **their understanding of, and attitude to, HIA;**
- **other factors that might influence their decision**

## **Supporting decision-making: engaging decision-makers throughout the HIA**

### **Advantages**

**Involving politicians or other decision-makers in the process of HIA can increase:**

- **their feelings of ownership about the process and the results;**
- **their understanding of the process and the results**

## **Supporting decision-making: engaging decision-makers throughout the HIA – how is it done?**

- **Screening – discussion of the results and decision whether to do HIA**
- **Scoping – as members of the Steering Group**
- **Appraisal – as key informants and or as stakeholders during consultation**
- **Monitoring and evaluation, particularly process and impact evaluation, and receiving the results of outcome evaluation**

# Challenges when working with politicians and other decision-makers

## Possible reactions to HIA

- Scepticism or cynicism
- Lack of understanding of the concept and what it can deliver
- Perception that HIA acts as brake on, or barrier to, the proposal
- Fear that HIA takes away their power as politicians or decision-makers

# Overcoming the challenges of working with politicians and other decision-makers

## Taking HIA to the politicians and other decision-makers

- Run an awareness campaign about HIA targeted at the politicians and other decision-makers
- Run a seminar that gives politicians and other decision-makers the opportunity to find out about it and discuss the possibilities for implementation within your area
- Find two or more champions for HIA

# **Overcoming the challenges of working with politicians and other decision-makers**

## **Taking politicians and other decision-makers to HIA**

- **Find out what they want from HIA**
- **Involve them in the development of the HIA process and tools for your area**
- **Find ways to integrate HIA or an HIA approach into processes or procedures already being used in your organisation or partnership**