Health impact assessment in municipal decision-making

Contents of the PoHeFa Project training sessions

1. Promoting health in municipal decision-making

Matters mentioned Health Care Act (2011) in Finland:

- When planning and making decisions, local authorities shall assess and take into consideration any effects that their decisions may have on the health and social welfare of residents
- Monitoring the health and welfare of residents
  - Indicators -> necessary measures
- Assigning coordinators for health and welfare promotion
- Health promotion is cooperation
  - Departments
  - Public, private and third sector <-> service providers

Matters for consideration:

- Good things have already been achieved–there is also a positive point of view!
- Values and attitudes:
  - Health, welfare? Cf. sustainable development, the sustainable development of residents?
- Knowledge, resources
  - Consulting, cooperation
  - Health promotion in decision-making

2. Health impact assessment in municipal decision-making

Outline:

- What is advance impact assessment and why is it needed?
  - Impact targets and types
  - Applying the method
• Starting point, why use advance impact assessment?
  • Participating, encouraging others to participate
  • Formulating and describing alternatives
  • The significance the impact assessment has on the preparation and decision-making process

Assessment:

• Advance impact assessment
  – Anticipating future impacts
  – Determining indicators for monitoring purposes
• Assessment during implementation
  – Monitoring the fulfilment of identified impacts
• Retrospective assessment
  – Assessing the fulfilment of anticipated impacts
  – Did unanticipated impacts occur?

Health impact assessment

  – Structures and clarifies preparation and decision-making
  – Supports pluralist, open and transparent decision-making
  – Introduces decision alternatives
  – Facilitates the setting of (strategic) objectives
  – Facilitates the assessment of the achievement of (strategic) objectives
  – Highlights contradictions between impacts
  – Helps to find impact chains and networks
  – Encourages value discussion
An example of an advance assessment template:

Decision alternatives 0, 1, 2 etc. are determined. Alternative 0 means continuing in the current situation without making any changes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative aspects, such as</th>
<th>Alternative 0</th>
<th>Alternative 1</th>
<th>Alternative 2 etc.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content aspect depending on the matter being decided on</td>
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<td>Fulfilment of democracy</td>
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<td>Economic aspect</td>
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<td>Resident aspect</td>
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<td>Cooperation between departments/sectors</td>
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<td>Management aspect</td>
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<td>Entrepreneurship aspect</td>
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<td>Technical aspects:</td>
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<td>- ICT and communication</td>
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<td>Possible risks</td>
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<td>Other aspects?</td>
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Different types of assessable impacts:

- Impacts on people
- Impacts on the environment
- Impacts on organisations
- Impacts on the economy

Use of the impact assessment method in smaller decisions, why and when?

- When there is not a lot of time to use
- Increasing understanding
- Launching a discussion
- Committing people
- Value discussion

Further material related to Human Impact Assessment and Health Impact Assessment:
