

HEALTH EQUITY 2020 TOOLKIT

APPENDIX 5

A series of questions to analyze equity in the policy Health Impact Assessment process

Based on: Gunther, 2011 (for the Equity Action project)

July 2015

This document arises from the project HEALTH EQUITY 2020 which has received funding from the European Union, in the framework of the Health Programme

A series of questions to analyze equity in the policy Health Impact Assessment process

(Source: Gunther, 2011 (for the Equity Action project))

Stage of HIA	The Questions	Action
Screening	<p>Some core questions you may want to ask as the policy is currently described/intended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which populations are currently relatively disadvantaged in the context of the policy? • Does the policy affect health equity issues in these populations? • Are the health equity issues affected directly or indirectly? • Does the policy enhance equity or increase inequity e.g. by affecting different population sub-groups differently because of what the policy targets, how the policy is implemented or how it works with/against existing policy? • What might the unintended consequences be (positive and negative)? • What might consequences be of the policy be on the determinants of health? <p>Some enhanced questions you may want to ask as the policy is currently described/intended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could there be public concern about the equity of the policy? • Could there be an equity concern by other key stakeholders and/or those affected by the policy? 	<p>If it is identified that the policy may have an impact affecting health equity, then the rest of the questions should then be used during the HIA. If it is identified that the policy does not have an impact on health equity, then it is advised that the rest of the questions are not needed.</p>
Scoping	<p>Some core questions you may want to ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which determinants of health that effect health equity will be assessed in the context of the policy? • What information is needed to understand health equity impacts of the policy and inform recommendations/suggestions? • What evidence (quantitative and/or qualitative) will be used that will show how the health equity impact is identified? • Which populations are relevant to the policy? (see appendix 4 for some groups) • What information is needed about the relevant populations to determine if there is an health equity issue? • Who will be involved in the assessment i.e. will key stakeholders or those effected by the policy (target groups) have an opportunity to feed into the HIA to help determine health equity dimensions? • How will health equity impacts be presented e.g. number of people affected, types of health/wellbeing impacts, and the degree of change in equity/inequity? • How will uncertainty in health equity impacts be handled e.g. unknown effects, absence of evidence, how public views and professional judgement can be used alongside scientific 	<p>Once the questions have been answered, this should provide you with the scope to be able to identify the potential impacts and affected populations with regard to health equity.</p>



	knowledge, etc.?	
	<p>Some enhanced questions you may want to ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider long-term/trans-generational timescale of the health equity impacts, e.g. some equity impacts may be trans-generational, or occur over the life-course What existing policies and new policy developments are likely to affect/interact with the equity aspects of the policy under consideration and how will this information be assessed? 	
Appraisal	<p><i>Building on the scoping answers, now consider some core questions you may want to ask:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What health equity impacts have been identified as likely to arise from the policy? How will the identified health equity impacts be distributed? Does it introduce new health equity impacts? Considering the range of health equity impacts identified, what can be done to reduce the negatives and enhance the positives so that the health equity gradient is more equal/equity gap is narrower? (Consider direct and indirect impacts of the policy and the evidence to support such actions). Has the causal pathway and key factors in the causal links, been considered in the impact of health? <p>Some enhanced questions you may want to ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can the type, degree and likelihood of positive and negative health equity impacts be mapped against the different population groups' e.g. socio-economic, vulnerable/non-vulnerable? Does it make the existing health equity gradient steeper/shallower or the gap bigger/smaller? Do the benefits of changing the policy, for moderating or removing these differential impacts outweigh the social, economic and environmental costs or disadvantages of doing so? (Consider the health equity impacts in the short-term, medium and long-term). 	<p><i>Answering the questions, you should be able to explicitly identify any gaps and/or gradients in health equity.</i></p>
Recommendations/ Suggestions	<p>Some core topic areas in the recommendations/suggestions you may want to cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The impact of the policy on existing health equity issues – gradient and/or gap The policy's likely intended and unintended health equity impacts The evidenced based measures that would reduce the negative and enhance the positive health equity impacts of the policy The health equity indicators to be used to monitor the policy The changes required to reduce the health equity impact of the policy. <p>Some enhanced topic areas in the recommendations/suggestions you may want to cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The existing health equity issues in the policy area The policy's likely interactions/influence/effects on existing and emerging policies that could increase health inequity 	<p><i>Provide the policy maker with information that describes the health equity impact of the policy and options to mitigate them.</i></p>



- The measures required to align the policy with existing or newly emerging policy to enhance health equity
- The cost-benefits of the measures recommended (data and expertise dependent).

Monitoring and Evaluation

Some questions you may want to ask regarding monitoring and evaluation specifically for equity:

Monitoring

- How will you know if health inequities have been reduced? (What health equity data/outcomes are being collected on the impact of the policy on the identified groups in the assessment stage, compared to the whole population)
- Have the stakeholders (including target groups) been asked what the health impact of the policy has been to them?
- How will increased inequity be dealt with?

Evaluation

- Was the HIA carried out as defined in the in the scoping stage coving the health equity issues? If not, why not?
- Were the recommendations of the health equity parts of the HIA adopted?
- Did the health equity focus of the policy change in relation to the HIA and if so how?
- What was the process to enable changes in the policy in relation to health equity?
- Did the stakeholders and target groups have access to the policy making process and if so, were their views considered?
- If so, did this help in the analysis of health equity?

Answering the questions in this stage will help ensure that the impact of the HIA on health equity is captured and consequences monitored.

Source: Gunther, S. for the Equity Action project (2011). A series of questions to analyse equity in the policy Health Impact Assessment process. In: Learning from Equity Action Health Impact Assessment (Processing and Training). Document can be found at: http://www.equitychannel.net/uploads/Learning_from_equity_Action_Health_impact_Assessment_and_equity_v4%20200114v2.doc

