Environment and Health Indicators

Technical Working Group on Indicators and Priority diseases
Subgroup Environment & Health Indicators
Environment & Health Indicators

- Expression of *link* environment - health
- *Targeted* at specific *policy* concern
- Presented in a form which facilitates *interpretation* for effective decision-making
- *Useful* for highlighting problems, identifying trends and tracking of policy progress
- *Communication* with the public
- *Cannot* identify cause-effect relationships alone
Conclusions baseline inventory

- Numerous indicators sets available, mostly aimed at environment OR health, except WHO-EHIS
- No shared information infrastructure
- Differences in indicator definitions and construction
- Limitations of international reporting mechanisms in providing E&H relevant data needed for informed priority setting, policy development and communication
- Need for integration E&H, between sectors/themes
- Integrate/link info from existing systems (surv/mon) and experiences at (inter)national level will save resources, manpower, reporting burden; effective actions

Thus: Shared E&H information system
Main elements of E&H information system/process

Environment and Health Information System – main system elements

Indicators

Adjusting & Updating

Policy review

Assessment & reporting

HIA / SIA

Data generation

Access & Communication

Evidence review
Objectives for Action Plan 2004-2010

To enable informed priority setting, policy development, tracking of actions, communication:

- endorse activities to establish standardised E&H Indicator reporting and assessment
- set up decision-making process to support progressive development of E &H information system
- set up organisational framework
- endorse programme with EU funding to promote national/regional development
Scope of recommendations

- Organisational framework
- Build up set of E&H Indicators
- Develop effective methodology (linking, analysis, reporting)
- Improve methodology to assess health risks, effectiveness risk-reducing measures
- Improve access to information, communication and education
Timetable & costs for implementation

| PHASE 1: | Set up national & international decision-making process & steering mechanism & set of objectives/principles (2004-2005) |
| PHASE 2: | Establish organizational/technical infrastructure, build information system (2005-2010, mid-term review) |

1-10 million Euro/year, depending on final design/objectives; may save 100 million health costs (preliminary estimates)
Option 1: Establish organisational framework for indicator assessment and reporting in the European region

- European steering body (EC, EEA, WHO, Eurostat..., member states, civil society) & working group (inter)national repr.
- Central institution (physical or virtual E&H Agency)
- International Network
- Shared information structure
- Links to academic/policy communities
- National networks
- Develop intercountry/region programmes; capacitybuilding
  or a combination of the above
Tasks for steering body/central institution

- Develop stepwise & flexible process approval/selection system elements
- Oversee further development information base
- Manage work for system elements, coordinate input of partners, esp WHO-EHIS, EEA

Alternative: collaboration between existing bodies
Option 2: develop harmonised methodology

- ‘Harmonisation’ of existing indicator sets, flexible approach
- ‘Harmonisation’ of underlying datasets
- Harmonised guidelines and instruments for data collection, assessment, reporting *eg E&H module HIS*
  - Pros: facilitate prioritisation/early warning, comparability, data-transmission
  - Cons: costs of data collection/storage, cooperation in standardisation
  - Involve all stakeholders in building-process
Strategy for development of harmonised methodology

**Purpose**
To assess the quality of environmental health (adults & children) in Europe

**Identify priorities & indicators**
Asthma, respiratory disease & air quality; water borne disease; noise; housing, chemicals

**Data collection**
Populate indicators in priority areas; begin with existing data

**Review**
Review harmonized indicator sets in light of new and emerging environmental threats to public health, with special focus on children

**Assess status**
Using populated indicators sets, assess the situation in each nation for each priority area. Including:
- *Exposure*: ambient environment, community, home
- *Effects* on health status
- *Actions* undertaken
Option 3: Actions for indicator development with respect to information needs SCALE

- Develop & test ‘new’ indicators:
  - proxy indicators for exposure and effects
  - bio-indicators,
  - indicators for vulnerable periods and groups,
  - aggregated indicators (e.g. DALYS, COI).

- Develop methods to monitor and evaluate effect of combined exposures

- Harmonise existing indicators (e.g. respiratory diseases, neurodevelopmental disorders/cognition)
  - Pros: improve understanding, comparability, improve public health with respect to environment
  - Cons: costs for research & implementation
Option 4: Actions for improved assessment and reporting

- Mechanism for sharing experiences and improve integrated assessments
- Tools for linking environmental/spatial data (e.g., INSPIRE, GMES) with health and lifestyle data
- Methods for cost-benefit analysis aimed at children
- Biobanks (assessment long-term effects/multicausality)

Pros: generate synergies, improved understanding of causal relationship, targeted policies
Cons: Costs for research and implementation
Option 5: Actions for policy development and analysis

- Develop tools for informed decision-making / stakeholders discussion (checklist, factsheets etc)
- Develop policy performance indicators

- Pros: supports targeted policy, enhance effectiveness of policy measures
- Cons: Costs for research and implementation (low)
Option 6: Actions for improved communication and education (1)

EC/MS should endorse actions to ensure high-quality information exchange, using E&H IS:

- Communication strategy
- Develop tools to increase communication (eg policymakers, E&H professionals, public)
- Develop clear, easy-to-use information, processed at every step of policy-making process

- Pros: increased understanding different stakeholders, awareness raising; education, balanced and transparent decision-making; targeted preventive policy, cost-effective
- Cons: costs for development and implementation
Option 6: Actions for improved communication and education (2)

- Promote harmonisation of environmental medicine and its organisation
  - National Definitions
  - Harmonise curricula, degrees, organisation
  - Interdisciplinary training

- Pros: Improved understanding, comparability, awareness raising
- Cons: Costs for harmonisation, implementation (moderate)
THANK YOU!

Comments welcome!

Brigit.Staatsen@rivm.nl
Anke Joas: Bipromuc@t-online.de