Social Impact Assessment

Best practices in Finland

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Abbreviations

CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
GRI	Global Reporting Initiative
HIA	Health Impact Assessment
HuIA	Human Impact Assessment
IA	Impact Assessment
IAIA	The International Association for Impact Assessment
SIA	Social Impact Assessment

1. Introduction

This report has been prepared as a part of the Northern Periphery Programme WARES (Water Asset Renewable Energy Solutions) -project. The purpose of this report is to provide the project participants information about social impact assessment; what is the aim of the assessment and how it is conducted. Social impacts of the proposed technologies - wind energy, solar energy, biogas production through decomposition, hydro power and heat recovery from wastewater - are also discussed. In addition, the report provides information about social impact assessment in Finland. With the help of social media and studies found, information was also collected on how people in Northern Finland perceive the proposed technologies.

The main focus of this report is to give an overview of social impact assessment and what its steps are. The report begins with the description of social impact assessment, explanation of what social impacts are and listing the benefits of the assessment. This section gives the project participants a clear idea what social impact assessment is used for and what its goal is. Social impact assessment in Finland is also shortly discussed presenting the history of the assessment and its situation today.

Next, the impacts of the proposed technologies are described in order to provide information what the possible impacts of the pilot sites might be. Also the perceptions of Finnish people on renewable energy sources are studied and discussed so that the possible impacts of the proposed technologies in Finnish pilot sites can be examined even before conducting further studies and surveys on the community.

The rest of the report concentrates on conducting social impact assessment; the steps are presented and explained. The idea is not to give an exhaustive description of the steps, but to give an overall look of what phases should be included in the assessment. Also the techniques used in order to collect information for the assessment are presented. The main focus is on questionnaires as they are to be used in Task 5.1.

Finally, three company tools which help the water utilities act in a socially responsible manner and report their actions transparently are discussed. This section has also valuable information on what people have perceived to be important for water utilities to give information on.

2. Impact Assessment

IAIA, the International Association for Impact Assessment, defines Impact Assessment as "the process of identifying the future consequences of a current or proposed action". Impact Assessment (IA) uses physical, natural, and social sciences to create tools which are utilized to predict the expected consequences of possible decisions. IA provides information for decision-making, promotes transparency and participation of the public, and contributes to sustainable development. (IAIA 2009)

The output of the assessment depends on how the assessment has been conducted; the more effort and seriousness is put into the process, the better is the degree of success. The success of IA also depends on the follow-up which ensures that the recommendations made in the IA have been implemented and that they are effective. (IAIA 2009)

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is the oldest and the most well-established aspect of Impact Assessment. Other forms of IA, such as Social IA, Health IA, Ecological or Biodiversity IA, focus on a specific type of impact. They can be carried out independently or together as a joint exercise. The expression Integrated IA is used to describe the integration of these different forms of IA, but also a term Sustainability Assessment is used to describe the integration of environmental, economic, and social aspects of IA. (IAIA 2009)

3. Social Impact Assessment

3.1 Definition

IAIA describes Social Impact Assessment (SIA) as follows:

"Social Impact Assessment includes the process of analysing, monitoring and managing the intended and unintended social consequences, both positive and negative, of planned interventions (policies, programs, plans, projects) and any social change processes invoked by those interventions. Its primary purpose is to bring about a more sustainable and equitable biophysical and human environment."
(Vanclay 2003)

Described in a more general manner SIA is analysing, monitoring and managing the different social consequences caused by development (Vanclay 2003). SIA, as other impact assessments, is a tool which helps with decision making; it gives agencies and communities information about social and cultural factors that need be taken into consideration in decisions and can help to identify what actions are the most socially beneficial when it comes to local, regional, and national interests. (ICPGSIA 2003) SIA ensures that benefits are maximised and costs are minimised (Vanclay 2003). It is important to notice that SIA is, before anything, a proactive method (Sairinen & Kohl 2004).

SIA can be viewed as an umbrella, which covers the evaluation methods for all human impacts, as well as all the ways how people and communities interact with their socio-cultural, economic, and biophysical surroundings. SIA links together many different areas of expertise to be able to study all the impacts; aesthetic impacts, archaeological and cultural heritage impacts, community impacts, gender impacts, health impacts and political impacts as well as many others. For this reason, SIA requires a team approach rather than having a single person attending to all different areas. (Vanclay 2003)

Table 1 presents how different impacts are associated with their social aspects. For example according to standard thinking when noise level is under a certain limit, it is acceptable. However, an inhabitant may find the slightest change in noise disturbing. (Koivujärvi et al. 1998) SIA studies how people perceive noise rather than examining whether the noise level is under the permitted level or not.

Table 1. Different viewpoints of impact assessment (Koivujärvi et al. 1998).

Viewpoint		Social aspect
Environment	Noise (limits) Emissions (limits)	Perceived noise Perceived emissions Comfort, recreation, practising livelihood
Landscape	Changes in landscape	Perceived landscape
Land use	Restrictions in land use Settlement	Perceived change, changes in quality of life Community spirit
Cultural history	Changes in cultural environment	Changes in traditions
Health	Presented research results	Perceived health
Economy	Employment Tax income Livelihoods	Image of the municipality Atmosphere
Risks	Presented risk estimates Road safety	Perceived risks, fears Perceived road safety

SIA, in different countries, is generally based on legislation (Sairinen & Kohl 2004). It can be carried out as a part of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or separately from it as a more comprehensive review. The scope of SIA, under EIA mandates, varies between countries as it depends on the institutional arrangements. (UNEP 2002 p. 461-487) Aside from legislation, also sustainable development encourages conducting SIA as it emphasises the consideration and combining of ecological, economical and social aspects in all community planning (Kojola 1996).

3.2   Social Impacts

Defining what 'social impacts' are is not always straightforward; the definition and classification of social impacts differ between countries' Impact Assessment guidance documents (TEP & CEPS 2010). One definition is that social impacts include consequences to the way people live, work, and function with other people as well as social-psychological changes such as people's values and their perceptions of themselves, their community, and environment. (UNEP 2002 p. 461-487) Some of the impacts are corporeal i.e. physical reality, some perceptual or emotional (Vanclay 2002). Social impacts can be seen as changes to one or more of the following:

- ✓ people's way of life – e.g. how they live and work, how they interact with one another
- ✓ their culture – e.g. shared beliefs, customs, language
- ✓ their community – e.g. character, services, facilities
- ✓ their political systems – e.g. the extent to which people are able to participate in decisions that affect their lives
- ✓ their environment – e.g. the quality of air and water people use, physical safety
- ✓ their health and wellbeing – state of complete physical, mental, social, and spiritual wellbeing
- ✓ their personal and property rights
- ✓ their fears and aspirations – e.g. fears about the future of the community and what their hopes are for their own future and the future of their offspring

Source: adapted from Vanclay 2003

The importance of *context* should be emphasised; it means that the impacts need to be proportioned to the community and societal environment in question. Context is the combination of the social structure of the community, its resources and the existing components of well-being. In practise, context means that the impacts of a project are different in a big city and a small village. (Sairinen & Kohl 2004)

The impacts are experienced at different levels; they can be experienced by an individual, by family or household unit, by social organisations, institutions, or a community or society as a whole (Vanclay 2002). It should be noticed that the impacts differ depending on the social group in question. Vulnerable groups, and how they are influenced, should always be of prime concern. (Vanclay 2003)

3.3   Benefits of SIA

Significant benefits, both to the company and to the community, are gained from SIAs that embrace community involvement. By directly involving locals in planning teams, rather than only involving them through consultation, local resistance to projects is minimised, project success is increased and major planning disasters are prevented thus preventing associated costs. Also the accuracy of the SIA is increased. (Burdge & Vanclay 1996) Other benefits of SIA include reduced impact on communities and individuals through mitigation, enhanced benefits to those affected as well as better community and stakeholder relationships. (UNEP 2002 p. 461-487) The benefits described are listed below.

Benefits of SIA can include:

- ✓ *reduced impact* on communities or individuals – identification of mitigation measures is an integral element of SIA;
- ✓ *enhanced benefits* to those affected – SIA preparation also helps identify measures such as job training packages;
- ✓ *avoiding delays and obstruction* – a well prepared SIA demonstrates that social impacts are taken seriously and helps to gain development approval;
- ✓ *lowered costs* – addressing social impacts and mitigation measures at an early stage helps to avoid costly errors and remedial actions imposed at a later stage by regulatory agencies;
- ✓ *better community and stakeholder relationships* – experience has shown that SIA can help to allay fear and concern and build a basis of trust and cooperation necessary for the proponent to successfully introduce and operate the project; and
- ✓ *improved proposals* – an SIA provides information that adds value to existing projects and helps to design future ones.

Source: UNEP 2002 p. 461-487

4. Social Impact Assessment in Finland

In Finland, Social Impact Assessment commenced in 1994 when the Act on Environmental Impact Assessment Procedure (468/1994) came to force (Reinikainen & Karjalainen 2005). The related Government Decree (268/1999) defines the projects which need to perform EIA. Finnish legislation on EIA is based on the respective EU directive as well as the UN ECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) (Jantunen & Hokkanen 2010). SIA is also statutory in projects referred to in the Land Use and Building Act (132/1999) or the Act on the Assessment of the Impacts of the Authorities' Plans, Programmes and Policies on the Environment (THL 2013).

The Act on Environmental Impact Assessment Procedure does not use the concept 'social'. However, it states that environmental impacts include the direct and indirect effects on human health, living conditions and amenity. (Sairinen & Kohl 2004) The Act also demands for the hearing of people who may be affected by the project. In the Land Use and Building Act used in planning, the concept of social impact is directly mentioned (Sairinen & Kohl 2004). As the Act on Environmental Impact Assessment Procedure does not define the exact and concrete methods to assess impacts on humans, the interpretation of the law - the extent and accuracy of the assessment - varies between projects (Reinikainen & Karjalainen 2005).

In 1999 a guide (Ympäristövaikutusten arviointi, ihmisiin kohdistuvat terveydelliset ja sosiaaliset vaikutukset) by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health raised 'human impacts' as an umbrella term (Reinikainen & Karjalainen 2005). Human Impact Assessment (HuIA) combines Health Impact Assessment (HIA) and Social Impact Assessment (SIA) which before were separated. Human Impact Assessment is used as a tool for anticipating the effect on human health and welfare. (THL 2013) The National Institute for Health and Welfare (Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos in Finnish) has published a handbook 'Ihmisiin kohdistuvien vaikutusten arviointi 2003' which presents the principles and process of HuIA. It also provides a checklist of human impacts that a decision can have. The main categories are the following:

Impacts on

- ✓ population
- ✓ health
- ✓ residence and mobility
- ✓ economy and services
- ✓ community and area
- ✓ attitudes and conflicts
- ✓ participation

Source: Kauppinen & Tähtinen 2003

The process of HuIA can be divided into seven steps which are presented in Figure 1. The steps may overlap each other and it is possible to return to already conducted steps later on during the process. Some of the steps, such as collecting information, are ongoing processes which are a part of everyday work. (Liimatainen & Ryttyläinen 2006) The steps of SIA are further discussed in chapter 6 in this report.
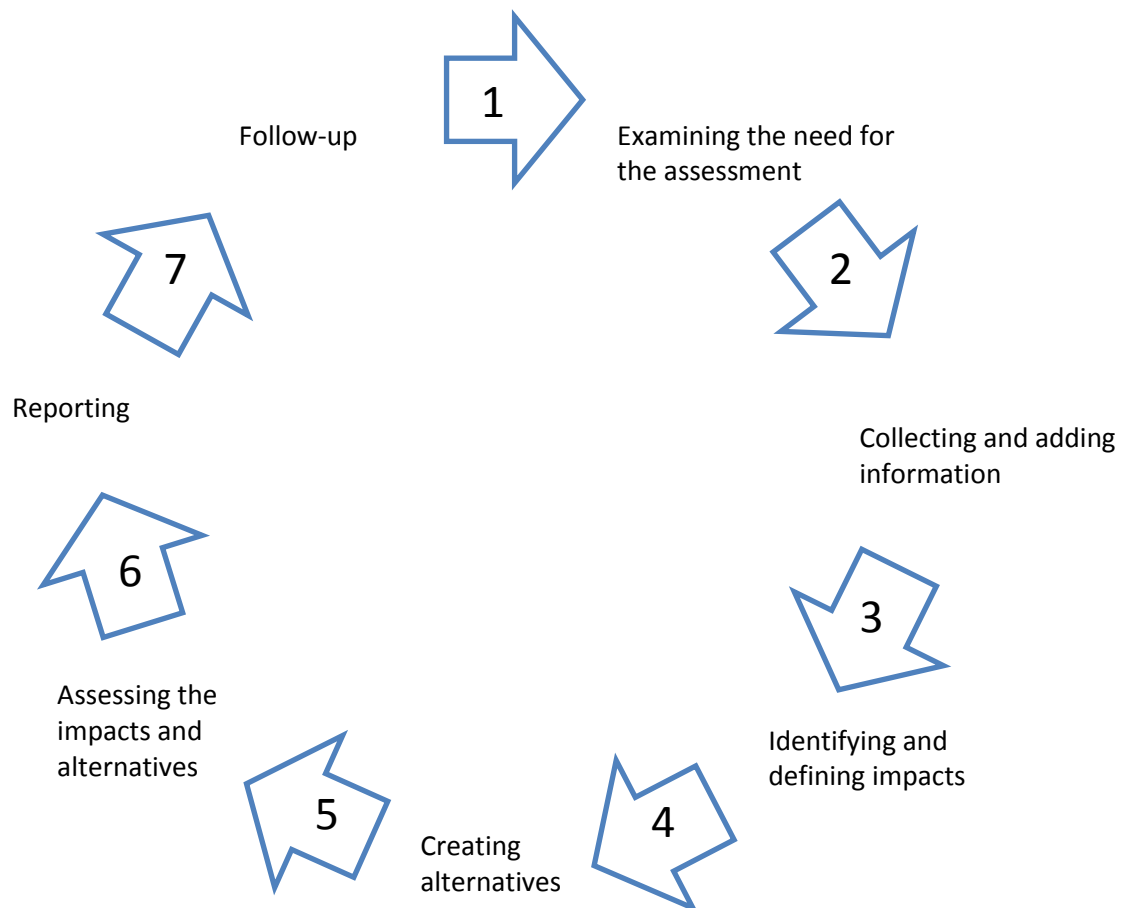

Figure 1. Steps of HuIA (adapted from Liimatainen & Ryttyläinen 2006)

As described, legislation requires assessing human impacts in certain projects, but HuIA is also recommended to be used in the preparation of other decisions as a non-statutory assessment. This aims to develop decision-making processes, improve the quality of decisions and to raise human well-being and health as one of the arguments which guide decision-making. The goal of HuIA is the same as SIA's; to create more transparent and involving decision-making processes. (Nelimarkka & Kauppinen 2007)

There are several publications available which promote SIA in Finland. For example in a report 'Terveyden edistämisen laatusuositus' (also available in English) published by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health in 2006 the consideration and prospective assessment of social impacts are emphasised. The Ministry has also published 'Sosiaali- ja terveyspolitiikan strategiat 2015' in which the strategies of social and health politics for 2015 are described. In this report under 'Improving

health and ability to function' it is said that "In decision-making, impacts to human health and social well-being are assessed in advance, also gender impacts of decisions are assessed." (Nelimarkka & Kauppinen 2007) The increase in the number of publications and handbooks during the last decade suggests that SIA is surely becoming an important area of assessment in Finland.

5. Social impacts of chosen technologies

In this chapter the social impacts of the possible technologies are studied. The technologies considered are wind energy, solar energy, hydroelectric power, biogas production through decomposition, and heat recovery from wastewater. The technologies can cause impacts during construction phase, during operation or during decommissioning. Adverse impacts caused during construction phase are quite similar with all the technologies; traffic to and from the site as well as noise.

As some of the technologies are implemented inside the facility, they are not as visible to the community as others; for example a wind turbine can be seen from a distance, but a heat recovery system is hidden inside the plant. Still, it needs to be remembered that some impacts are not seen, heard or smelled, but felt. Therefore also the technologies that are to be implemented inside the plant can have impacts on the community. Finally, it should be remembered that social impacts are not always adverse - positive impacts also arise (Vanclay 2002).

First, social impacts of each of the chosen technologies are studied. The general positive benefits of all the technologies are then described. Finally, a conclusion of all the impacts is drawn.

5.1.1 Social Impacts of Wind Energy

Wind energy can induce the following impacts on humans and the community:

> ✓ Aesthetic impacts
> ✓ Cultural impacts
> ✓ Impacts on human health and well-being
> ✓ Local economic and fiscal impacts
> ✓ Electromagnetic interference
>
> Source: Committee on Environmental Impacts of Wind Energy Projects et al. 2007

Aesthetic impacts

In many cases aesthetics is the primary reason for expressed concern in wind energy projects. But how people see wind turbines varies; some find them visually pleasing while others find them ugly machines which worsen the view. Landscapes can have cultural meaning that may not be understood by outside professionals. (Committee on Environmental Impacts of Wind Energy Projects et al. 2007) Involving the community in defining possible impacts is therefore crucial as will be pointed out in coming chapters.

Cultural impacts

Cultural impacts caused by wind energy can include for example impacts on recreational, historic, sacred and archaeological sites. Recreational impacts can be considered to be direct or indirect. Direct impacts can result when existing recreational activities are prevented or they require rerouting and indirect impacts include for example aesthetic impacts which may affect the recreational experience. On the other hand, wind turbines can also act as tourist sites where people can come and learn about wind energy. (Committee on Environmental Impacts of Wind Energy Projects et al. 2007)

Impacts on human health and well-being

Positive impacts created by wind energy projects on human health and well-being mainly accrue through improvements in air quality. The adverse impacts include noise and shadow flicker. Noise is caused during construction, operation and maintenance. Noise during operation can be mechanical noise or aerodynamic noise from the blades. Again, it should be noticed that people's tolerance to noises differ. (Committee on Environmental Impacts of Wind Energy Projects et al. 2007)

Shadow flicker is created when the blades rotate in sunny conditions casting shadows which move. Shadow flicker is a nuisance to people who live near the turbine. Another phenomenon, which shadow flicker should not be confused with, is caused by intermittent chopping of the sunlight behind the rotating blades. (Committee on Environmental Impacts of Wind Energy Projects et al. 2007)

Local economic and fiscal impacts

Wind energy projects create employment opportunities especially during construction phase (Tuulivoimaopas 2013). Workforce is needed for the creation or improvement of infrastructure for the site, for transportation and for installation and maintenance of the turbine. The creation of infrastructure - roads, power lines and optical fibre cables - or improvements to it can also be seen as economic impacts (Parkkila 2013). Wind energy projects also create tax revenue to the community in the form of real estate tax (property tax) (Tuulivoimaopas 2013).

Electromagnetic interference

Wind energy projects can have adverse impacts on signals thus affecting televisions, radios, microwave/radio fixed links, mobile phones and radar. Electromagnetic Interference (EMI) "interrupts, obstructs, or otherwise degrades or limits the effective performance of electronics or electrical equipment". Fortunately, the EMI effects of wind turbines are well understood and the interference effects can be predicted. (Committee on Environmental Impacts of Wind Energy Projects et al. 2007)

5.1.2 Social Impacts of Solar Energy

Solar panels do not create noise during operation and they are quite unnoticeable. Still, some people may find them an eyesore. 'Beauty is in the eye of the beholder' can be applied in the case of solar panels as it can be applied with wind turbines. The installation of solar panels is quite easy and it does not require much traffic to the site. Workforce is needed mainly for installation and maintenance.

5.1.3 Social Impacts of Hydroelectric Power

The impacts of small scale hydropower are limited to the immediate water systems. The impacts may include decrease in the river's value as a tourist site and possible noise of the turbines or other equipment. (Motiva 2010) Small scale hydropower plants adapt well to their surroundings thus creating only slight changes to the landscape (Motiva 2012). As they do not need separate reservoirs (Motiva 2012) no damage is done to the surrounding land area people might own.

5.1.4 Social Impacts of Biogas/Decomposition

Social impacts arising from biogas production are mainly caused by odour and traffic. The worst odours are caused by leaks, emission of insufficiently cleaned air and unintended gas leakages. If the plants are well-managed the impacts caused by odours from these sources can be reduced. "Biogas plants will hardly become completely odourless, but the odour nuisances from new plants should not exceed 3-4 days a year in the nearest residential area." Because of the odours, house prices may be affected. It is difficult to determine a distance how far a biogas plant should be built from the residential area in order to avoid the odours, as there are differences between plants and in people's acceptance. Traffic to the plant may also be a reason for the community members to reject the construction of a biogas plant. (Skøtt 2006)

Safety in biogas plants is also an important aspect. Safety issues such as explosion prevention, asphyxiation and poisoning prevention as well as hygienic safety are important to be fulfilled in order to avoid adverse impacts on workers. (Al Seadi et al. 2008)

5.1.5 Social Impacts of Heat Recovery from Wastewater

As the equipment needed for the heat recovery from wastewater are situated inside the facility, social impacts are minimal. The main social impacts, such as gained knowledge and self-sufficiency on energy, which also apply to the other technologies described in this report, can be found in the following chapter 5.1.6.

5.1.6   Other positive impacts of the technologies

As has been pointed out, the benefits of the chosen renewable energy technologies are not only limited to the environmental aspects such as reduced impact to air, water, and land, but the technologies also provide many benefits for communities (Pembina Institute 2013). As the use of renewable energy increases, the use of fossil fuels decreases hence decreasing its import (Wiesmeth & Golde 2013). Countries and communities become less dependent on other areas and become self-sufficient on energy; local control of energy production and the security of energy supply increase and prices stabilise (Pembina Institute 2013).

Implementing renewable energy supports local and regional employment; knowledge in the fields such as engineering, consulting, design, installation, and maintenance are needed (Sustainability Victoria 2013). During the first projects new experience is gathered and it can be used in new projects thus making it easier to implement more renewable energy in the area. Renewable energy projects also increase education and information among the inhabitants. People become more aware of environmental, waste, and health issues and take more responsibility for their actions. (Wiesmeth & Golde 2013). Implementing renewable energy can improve the image of the community thus attracting businesses, inhabitants and tourists into the area. New infrastructure or improvements to the old one are also impacts that can benefit the whole community.

5.1.7   Conclusions on the impacts of the proposed technologies

As can be seen from the chapters above, some of the social impacts are characteristic to particular technologies while most of the impacts can be applied to all five technologies. Impacts such as noise and dust are related to all of the technologies during construction, but wind energy and hydro power can cause noise also during operation. The two can also have impacts on leisure and recreation possibilities. Property values can be influenced by wind turbines and odours from biogas production. While the other technologies can have aesthetic impacts as they are visible to community members, heat recovery from waste water does not have these impacts since it is located inside the facility. Positive impacts all the technologies can have include employment, knowledge and experience, improved image (both for the water utility and the community), improved infrastructure as well as self-sufficiency on energy.

All in all, wind energy and biogas production have the most impacts on the community. They are bigger constructions than the other three and they create impacts such as noise and shadow flicker or odour which are seen only as adverse impacts. The other technologies - solar energy, small-scale hydro power and heat recovery from wastewater - are more subtle choices when it comes to adverse impacts.

5.1.8   Social impacts of the proposed technologies in Northern Finland

The impacts, both positive and negative, inflicted by the chosen technologies on communities in Northern Finland are now described. The impacts were studied observing the perceptions of Finnish people on the proposed technologies in social media. Studies about the perceptions were also used. Conclusions on the impacts were then made using a list of social impacts by Vanclay (2002). The original list by Vanclay can be found in Appendix 1. The impacts which are thought to be the most distinct are presented in Table 2.

In the table, each of the technologies are studied separately; the x indicates that the particular technology inflicts the impact and the colour is used to show which impacts are perceived negative (red) and which positive (green). Lighter colours indicate that the impacts are perceived to be somewhat negative or positive, but that they are more subtle. Light blue colour indicates that the impact is neutral; people's perceptions cannot be concluded to be tilted to either positive or negative direction. NA indicates that the particular impact is not applicable to the technology in question.

As was described in the previous chapter, some impacts are related to particular technologies while some can be related to all the five. This can also be seen from the table (Table 2). All the five technologies can be seen as having a positive impact on the aspirations for the future, on the infrastructure and economic prosperity as well as on employment. They have also somewhat positive impacts on the community cohesion as they can bring people together to discuss about renewable energy and whether its use should be increased or decreased in their community. Participation in decision making can also be seen as somewhat positive. These issues are marked as 'somewhat positive' because it could be concluded from social media that Finnish people did not see these impacts to be as important as the others.

From social media it was easy to conclude that the perceived quality of the living environment, for example noise, dust and odour, were seen as extremely adverse impacts. Some technologies cause these more than the others hence some are marked negative and others somewhat negative. Uncertainty and dissatisfaction were not issues that concerned people in social media and are therefore seen as only somewhat negative.

Wind energy

Wind energy is a frequently discussed topic in Finnish discussion forums. It does not get support; people who live or have lived close to wind turbines describe the adverse impacts to be noise, shadow flicker and the unpleasant view created by the big construction. Wind turbines are also seen to disturb the ability to enjoy nature. The fact that wind energy is financially supported seems to also be an aspect which is seen in a negative light. However, studies about the perceptions on wind energy suggest that the majority of Finns would want to increase the use of wind energy. For this reason the feelings in relation to the planned project is marked with light red; even though discussions can be seen as extremely negative, studies indicate that most people would still want to increase the number of wind turbines.

Table 2 Observed and concluded social impacts of the proposed technologies in Northern Finland (list of impacts adapted from Vanclay 2002).

Indicative Health and Social Well-being Impacts	Wind	Solar	Hydro	Biogas	Heat recovery
Changed aspiration for the future for self and children	x	x	x	x	x
Uncertainty - being unsure about the effects or meaning of a planned project	x	x	x	x	x
Feelings (positive or negative) in relation to the planned project - which may result in formation of interest groups	x	x	x	x	x
Dissatisfaction (betrayal) due to failure of a planned project to deliver promised benefits	x	x	x	x	x
Indicative Quality of the Living Environment (Liveability) Impacts					
Perceived quality of the living environment - in terms of exposure to dust, noise, odour, vibration etc.	x	x *	x	x	x *
Leisure and recreation opportunities and facilities	x		x	x	NA
Aesthetic quality - visual impacts, outlook etc.	x	x	x	x	NA
Adequacy of physical infrastructure - impact on the existing infrastructure of the community	x	x	x	x	x
Indicative Economic Impacts and Material Well-being Impacts					
Economic prosperity and resilience - the level of economic affluence of a community and the extent of diversity of economic opportunities	x	x	x	x	x
Property values	x			x	
Employment	x	x	x	x	x
Indicative Cultural Impacts					
Loss of natural and cultural heritage - damage to or destruction of cultural, historical, archaeological or natural resources, including e.g. historic sites and places of religious, cultural and aesthetic value	x		x	x	
Indicative Family and Community Impacts					
Perceived and actual community cohesion	x	x	x	x	x
Indicative Institutional, Legal, Political and Equity Impacts					
Participation in decision making **	x	x	x	x	x

* During construction

** Through community involvement during impact assessment

Positive impacts   Negative impacts   Neutral impacts

Somewhat positive impacts   Somewhat negative impacts

Solar energy

The perceptions of Finnish people on solar energy are positive. People are eager to learn more about the equipment needed to produce solar energy for their own use and how viable an option solar energy is in Northern Finland. People are not taken aback by the fact that Finnish winters can cause difficult conditions for producing solar energy. They would like to see more solar panels on the roofs and thus seem to find them creating a positive image. Also studies support this enthusiasm.

Hydro power

Not many discussions were found on small scale hydro power. People seemed to be interested in testing if they could produce some energy from a nearby river or brook. However, people oppose big dams because they are said to have adverse effects on fish populations. They are also said to cause changes in ice thickness. Because the plant in this project would be small, the adverse impacts are not seen as severe as would be the case if a bigger plant was being built. For this reason the negative impacts are only marked with light red. The aesthetics of hydro power were not seen to have either positive or negative impact hence it is marked as neutral.

Biogas

Biogas is another topic besides solar energy which Finnish people seem to be the most interested about. People see it as a viable option for renewable energy in the future. Even though people in social media do not seem to discuss the odours caused by the production of biogas, it is still marked to have somewhat negative perceived impacts on the living environment; the odour can become a problem if the plant is too close to a residential area. The odour can also affect property values near the plant. Leisure and recreation opportunities are also marked as somewhat negative as the plant can be quite big and thus have impacts on the opportunities to go to an area which was accessible before.

Heat recovery from waste water

As there were only a few discussions to be found on heat recovery from waste water, the perceptions are difficult to determine. Still, heat recovery was seen as a solution which has hidden possibilities and it was thus seen to generate positive feelings among Finns. As the system itself is hidden inside the plant, there are no aesthetic impacts or impacts to leisure opportunities.

6. Conducting Social Impact Assessment

As described, Social Impact Assessment examines how a proposed development will change the lives of community members; both current and future. Hence, involving the community and becoming familiar with its values and concerns is an important part of SIA. Others to be involved in the process should include community leaders and others who represent diverse interests in the community. (Edwards 2000).

SIA is recommended to be started in an early stage of the project and continued as an iterative process throughout the length of the project continuing all the way to monitoring and evaluation (Rietbergen-McCracken 1998).

6.1   Steps in SIA process

When conducting SIA it is important to understand the difference between the actual work steps and the administrative steps. Work steps are related to the needs of the actual assessment and they are universal. The administrative steps, on the other hand, are related to organising the relationships between authorities and other parties. The administrative steps differ from country to country. (Sairinen & Kohl 2004)

As mentioned, the work steps are universal, but there are different lists of steps available. The lists include the same main steps but may use different terms or emphasise different issues. This can be seen when comparing the two lists presented in this report (Figure 2); the steps of HuIA presented in chapter 4 and the steps from Principles and Guidelines for Social Impact Assessment in the USA (ICPGSIA 2003). The phases the two lists have in common are gathering information for the creation of a baseline, identifying the possible impacts, creating alternatives and follow-up. The steps marked with black are different between the two lists presented; the steps can be included in the other steps or are not seen worth listing as they can be thought to be evident. However, the lists tend to follow the same structure as the other areas of EIA (Koivujärvi et al. 1998).

In this report, the ten steps by ICPGSIA are discussed in more detail. The descriptions of the steps are complemented with material from Community Guide to Development Impact Analysis (Edwards 2000), Ihminen ja ympäristön muutos (Sairinen & Kohl 2004) and Environmental Impact Assessment Training Resource Manual (UNEP 2002).
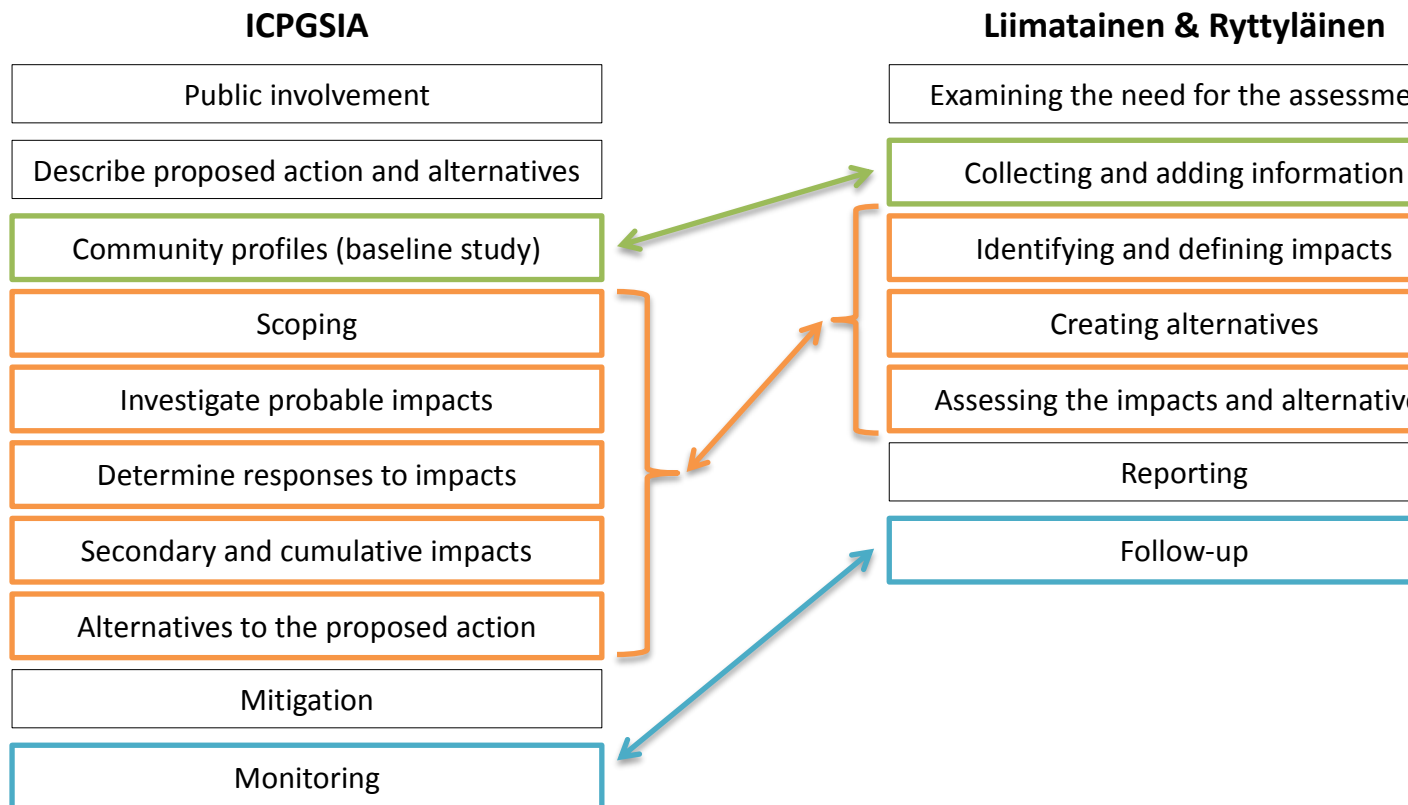
ICPGSIA   **Liimatainen & Ryttyläinen**

ICPGSIA	Liimatainen & Ryttyläinen
Public involvement	Examining the need for the assessme
Describe proposed action and alternatives	Collecting and adding information
Community profiles (baseline study)	Identifying and defining impacts
Scoping	Creating alternatives
Investigate probable impacts	Assessing the impacts and alternativ
Determine responses to impacts	Reporting
Secondary and cumulative impacts	Follow-up
Alternatives to the proposed action	
Mitigation	
Monitoring	

Figure 2 Steps of SIA (adapted from ICPGSIA 2003; Liimatainen & Ryttyläinen 2006)

1. Public involvement

Public involvement should begin right at the start when planning for the proposed action and alternatives. In this step a public involvement plan is develop to ensure that all potentially affected public groups are involved and heard. This requires identifying and working with all the people and groups who are potentially affected. Groups that can be affected include those who live near the proposed site, those who will hear, smell or see the development, those who have an interest in the proposal but may not live in proximity or those who normally use the land. These groups can be identified through e.g. spatially oriented census data or literature review. (ICPGSIA 2003)

Once the potentially affected individuals and groups have been identified, representatives from the parties should be systematically consulted in order to determine potential areas of concern and discuss how each representative might be involved during initial planning and the final decision. The public involvement program is planned and set in motion; it will last through implementation and finally become a foundation for follow-up. (ICPGSIA 2003)

Techniques for public involvement

✓ Focus groups
Includes small discussion groups to give "typical" reactions of the general public. Normally conducted by a professional facilitator. May be several parallel groups or sessions.
Advantages: provides in-depth reaction and detailed input; good for predicting emotional reactions.
Disadvantages: may not be representative of the general public or a specific group. Might be perceived as manipulative.

✓ Interviews
Face-to face interviews with key persons or stakeholders.
Advantages: can be used to anticipate reactions or gain key individual support and provide targeted education.
Disadvantages: requires extensive staff time and an effective interviewer.

✓ Hearings
Formal meetings where people present formal speeches and presentations.
Advantages: may be used for introductory or "wrap-up" meetings; useful for legal purposes or to handle general emotional public input safely.
Disadvantages: can exaggerate differences without opportunity for feedback or rebuttal; does not permit dialogue; requires time to organize and conduct.

✓ Meetings
Less formal meetings of persons to present information, ask questions, etc.
Advantages: highly legitimate form for public to be heard on issues. May be structured to allow public to be heard on issues and small group interaction.
Disadvantages: may permit only limited dialogue; may get exaggerated positions or grandstanding; may be dominated by forceful individuals.

✓ Workshops
Smaller meeting designed to complete a task or communicate detailed or technical information.
Advantages: very useful to handle specific tasks or to communicate, in a hands-on way, technical information; permits maximum use of dialogue and consensus building.
Disadvantages: inappropriate for large audiences; may require several different workshops due to size limitations; requires much staff time in detailed preparations and many meetings.

✓ Survey/Polls
Carefully designed questions are asked of a selected portion of the public.
Advantages: provides a quantitative estimate of public opinion.
Disadvantages: susceptible to specific wording of questions; provides only a static snapshot of a changing public opinion; can be costly.

Source: Edwards 2000, p. 50

2. Describe proposed action and alternatives

In this stage the proposed action and reasonable alternatives are described. The proposed action is described in enough detail to begin to identify the data requirements needed from the proponent to do a preliminary assessment. (ICPGSIA 2003)

3. Community profiles (baseline study)

During this stage the relevant human environment of influence and baseline conditions are described. The community profile is "the existing conditions and past trends associated with the human environment which the proposed action is to take place" (ICPGSIA 2003, p. 245). When investigating the human environment, dimensions such as the following may be used (notice that these dimensions apply for construction projects and geographically located programs and policies) (ICPGSIA 2003):

✓ Relationships with the biophysical environment, including: ecological setting; aspects of the environment seen as resources/problems; areas having economic, recreational, aesthetic and/or symbolic significance to indigenous populations; residential arrangements and living patterns, including relationships among communities/social organizations; and if available, attitudes toward environmental and patterns of natural resource use.

✓ Historical background, including: initial settlement and subsequent shifts in population; key developmental events and eras; past or ongoing community controversies, particularly those involving technology and/or the environment; and other experiences likely to affect the level or distribution of the impacts of, and/or local receptivity to, the proposed action.

✓ Political and social resources, includes: who has the authority and resources to address issues and problems; the capacities of relevant systems or institutions; friendship networks and patterns of cleavage or cooperation among potentially affected groups; levels of residential stability; distributions of socio-demographic characteristics such as age and ethnicity; presence of distinctive or potentially vulnerable groups (for instance, low income); and linkages among geopolitical units.

✓ Culture, attitudes and social-psychological conditions, including: attitudes toward the proposed action; trust in political and social institutions; perceptions of risks; relevant psychological coping and adjustment capacity; cultural cognition of society and environment; assessed quality of life; and important values that may be relevant to, or affected by, the proposed action.

✓ Economic and financial background (to the extent not listed in other parts of the community profile) include: historical numbers of persons employed by financial sectors and type of firm; payroll size and the amounts of business and sales receipts and taxes by sector and type of firm.

✓ Population characteristics including: the demographics of relevant groups (including all significant stakeholders and underrepresented and disadvantaged populations and groups); major industrial and agricultural activities; the labor markets to include available labor by occupational category by race and nation origin; unemployment and underemployment numbers; present population and expected changes; availability of housing, infrastructure and services; size, gender and age structure of households; and seasonal migration patterns to include both leisure and labor migrants.

Source: adapted from ICPGSIA 2003, p. 245

The level of effort which is put into this stage should be comparable with the size, cost and degree of expected impacts of the proposal. Information should be sought from existing literature on comparable or analogous impact events, key local informants and readily available documents not forgetting on-site investigation. (ICPGSIA 2003)

4. Scoping

During scoping the full range of probable social impacts that will be addressed are indentified. This is done through discussions/interviews with sponsoring agency and potentially affected populations. Ideally, all affected groups and individuals would contribute to the selection of SIA variables that ought to be assessed. (ICPGSIA 2003)

It is often impossible to assess every social impact associated with the proposal. Hence, the scope should be refined based on what the community finds important; residents and community leaders are the most reliable sources for identifying the priority social goals of the community. Surveys and interviews are good methods to be used for this purpose. Edwards suggests: "If time permits, a survey of community members can guide the design of an assessment for a single proposed development." (Edwards 2000)

5. Investigate probable impacts

During this step the probable social impacts are investigated. The impacts are formulated in terms of predicted conditions without the proposed actions (i.e. the baseline condition), the predicted conditions with the proposed actions and the predicted impacts (i.e. differences between the futures with and without the proposed actions). (ICPGSIA 2003) Both quantitative and qualitative impacts should be assessed (Edwards 2000).

One important source used for estimation of future impacts is the record of previous experience. Other sources which can be used for the investigation of probable impacts include census and vital statistics, documents as well as field research, including representative interviews, hearings, group meetings and if possible surveys of the general population. (ICPGSIA 2003)

6. Determine responses to impacts

In this step the significance of the identified social impacts is determined. Now that the direct impacts have been estimated the next step is to estimate how the affected public will respond to the impacts; what their attitudes and actions will be. Estimating the actions can be done using comparable cases and interviewing the possible affected individuals on how they themselves think they will act. The outcome of this assessment is often highly uncertain, but it provides information on potential problems and unexpected results. (ICPGSIA 2003)

7. Secondary and cumulative impacts

During this step the subsequent and cumulative impacts are estimated. Secondary/indirect impacts are caused by the primary/direct impacts and they often occur later and farther away than the primary impacts. Cumulative impacts result from incremental impacts of an action added to other past, present and reasonable foreseeable future actions; cumulative impacts are the sum of the proposal plus past and present activities in the same area. (ICPGSIA 2003)

8. Alternatives to the proposed action

This step involves recommending new or changed alternatives and estimating their consequences. Each alternative should be assessed separately. The methods used in step 5 (Investigate probable impacts) can be applied here but on a more modest scale. (ICPGSIA 2003)

9. Mitigation

SIA should not only forecast impacts, but it should identify methods to mitigate adverse impacts (ICPGSIA 2003). The first priority in mitigating social impacts should be avoiding impacts as a whole, the second reduction or minimisation of impacts, and the last resort to offset or compensate (UNEP 2002 p. 461-487).

10. Monitoring

During monitoring the fulfilled impacts are compared with the anticipated impacts and the efficiency of the mitigation methods is assessed. Monitoring is important in order to gain systematic information on how the assessment succeeded and to be able to prepare for possible unexpected impacts. Planning for monitoring should begin already when collecting basic information. (Sairinen & Kohl 2004)

As a product of SIA an assessment report is produced. In the report collected data, descriptions of objectives, solution alternatives and their impacts as well as comparison and its results are presented. The report also includes description on how these outcomes have been reached. Also the uncertainties and conflicts in the assessment are good to be presented. (Sairinen & Kohl 2004)

6.2 Techniques of SIA

In this chapter the techniques for gathering information mentioned in the steps of SIA are described. The main focus is in the preparation of questionnaires as they are to be used in Task 5.1. However, it should be noticed that the most effective and comprehensive method for gathering information is to use all the techniques - statistics, literature and interviews - side by side (Jantunen & Hokkanen 2010).

The following list of techniques has been obtained from a Finnish report SVA Sosiaalisten vaikutusten arviointi - Ohjeita YVA -konsulteille ja hankkeista vastaaville by Johanna Kojola (Kojola 1996) complementing the 'Surveys' -section with information from A guide to questionnaire design by Data Unit Wales (Data Unit Wales 2009). What should be remembered when gathering information is that "The techniques used by a researcher to conduct SIA should be planned so that they support decision making. The amount of information is not central but the quality - that is the suitability of the information for the assessment of the project and for making the right decisions. " (Kojola 1996).

6.2.1 Involvement

As mentioned in several occasions in this report, it is important to involve experts in different fields and the community members in order to conduct the best SIA possible. The goal of SIA is to study and take into account all the different views; hence the importance of involvement cannot be underestimated. Involvement should not include only hearing the opinions of the citizens but acknowledging them. (Kojola 1996)

6.2.2 Observation

Observation can be involving or non-involving. Involving observation means that there is an intensive interaction with the researcher and the subject. Typical places for conducting involving observation include places where people gather and which are situated on their social surroundings, for example public events, shops and post offices. In non-involving observation the researcher studies characteristics chosen beforehand by observing and assessing from outside. (Kojola 1996)

6.2.3 Secondary data

Secondary data is already existing data which has not been collected for the use of SIA but which can be used in conducting SIA. The sources of secondary data include for example statistics, maps, previous studies and surveys as well as newspaper articles. The data obtained can be used for example to study the historical background of the area, assessing the infrastructure and services and getting an overall view of the everyday life in the community. (Kojola 1996)

6.2.4 Surveys

Surveys are recommended to be used when it is known what information is essential for the assessment (Kojola 1996). There are different types of surveys such as postal (self-completion), face-to-face interviews or telephone surveys. Each of these types has specific characteristics that the designer needs to recognise, e.g. how complex questions can be. Postal surveys should have straightforward layout which is easy to complete whereas face-to-face interviews and telephone surveys where the interviewer is involved, the questions and questionnaire can be more complicated. (Data Unit Wales 2009)

Question design

The questions can be *open-ended* or *closed*. Open-ended questions allow the respondents to answer in their own words. In closed question surveys answer alternatives are presented; the questions can be dichotomous (Yes/No) or multi-choice. In the case of dichotomous questions it is good to add

'Don't know' option where appropriate. The multi-choice question should offer an exhaustive list of answer options. When this is not possible an 'Other' or 'Other - please specify' options should be added. (Data Unit Wales 2009)

Furthermore, questions can be *factual* or *non-factual*; factual questions ask about facts, past behaviour or events whereas non-factual questions ask respondents' opinions. Non-factual questions might have answer alternatives such as 'strongly agree/disagree, tend to agree/disagree or neither agree nor disagree'. The answers to closed questions might also be presented as a list of issues which the respondent needs to rank. In this case short lists are advised to be used in order to not burden the respondent too much. With non-factual questions there is also a risk that questions about satisfaction might lead to a high proportion of satisfied answers. A good way to avoid this is to replace the question with two questions; the first could ask how important a subject is to the respondent and the second what their experience of the issue is. Also hypothetical questions should be avoided. (Data Unit Wales 2009)

When designing the questions for the survey it is important to remember that the quality of the questions influences the quality of the responses. They can also affect the likelihood of respondents completing the whole survey. (Data Unit Wales 2009) Following are some general question design guidelines:

✓ Avoid ambiguous terms or phrasing
   For example do not ask 'Have you visited a dentist recently?' Replace *recently* with a period of time such as six months.
✓ Avoid technical terms
✓ Do not use unnecessary negatives (double negatives)
✓ Do not ask leading questions
✓ Do not ask more than one question at a time
✓ Avoid overly long and complex questions
✓ Ensure that *you* in any question is clear about who it is referring to
   For example substituting you with *you personally* or *your household* will provide clarity.
✓ Avoid asking questions of proxies
   It is not ideal to ask the respondent questions about another person.
✓ Provide exhaustive answer options
✓ Avoid using more answer options than necessary

Source: adapted from Data Unit Wales (2009)

Questionnaire design

The questionnaire itself needs to be designed carefully as well (Data Unit Wales 2009). The following questionnaire design guidelines can be applied to all three types of surveys mentioned:

✓ Introduce the questionnaire/interview

State the name of the organisation responsible for the research, explain the purpose and importance of the research and emphasise confidentiality. For postal surveys the introduction should also give instructions on how to complete the questionnaire and how to return the questionnaire as well as thank the respondent for their time.

✓ Ensure that the first question is appropriate

It should be relevant to all respondents, easy to answer and clearly related to the questionnaire subject.

✓ Ensure that the opening set of questions is easy to answer

✓ Ensure that questions have a meaningful order

✓ Provide clear section separation

For example 'Now I would like to ask you some questions about the environment'.

Source: adapted from Data Unit Wales 2009

If preparing a self-completion questionnaire also the following issues should be noted:

✓ Number each question

✓ Apply a common format to each question

Question wording and other instructions should be visually distinguished apart, have a logical ordering of instructions, definitions and answer options and have a consistent method for marking the selection of answer options.

✓ Include clear completion instructions

For example 'Tick one box only', 'Tick as many as apply'.

✓ Include clear routing instructions

For example if the respondent answers yes the instruction is 'Go to question 2' and if no the instruction is 'Go to question 3'.

✓ Do not split questions and answer option across pages

✓ Provide appropriate space for 'write in' answers

✓ At the end of the questionnaire, thank the respondent and include instructions on how to return the completed questionnaire

Source: adapted from Data Unit Wales 2009

Question testing

After developing the questions and the questionnaire they should be tested. There are various methods for testing them, but a quick and inexpensive one is to ask a colleague to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire can for example be sent informally to colleagues or reviewed by a panel of experts. Another method is to give the questionnaire to be completed by a test-respondent after which the interviewer questions them on how or why they answered the questions as they have. A more expensive alternative is a pilot testing which should replicate the exact conditions of the full survey. (Data Unit Wales 2009)

Question examples

Question banks are a good place to find questions to be included in a questionnaire. This way one does not have to reinvent questions. (Data Unit Wales 2009) Edwards has provided some sample survey questions which can be used in designing socio-economic assessment:

> ✓ What do you feel is important or special about the community (e.g. culture diverse population, urban or rural qualities, natural environment, access to amenities and services)?
> ✓ What do you consider important to the quality of life (e.g., clean air and water, good jobs, arts and culture, security and safety, good relations with neighbors) in this community? What do people you know think is important to the quality of life in this community?
> ✓ What do the local Chamber of Commerce or other community organizations "pitch" as key community attributes?
> ✓ What aspects of the community are you interested in changing or working to change?
> ✓ Do you feel the quality of life has improved or worsened over the last 10, 20 or 30 years? Why?
> ✓ Do you belong to or know of any particular group (e.g., low-income, minority, farmers, elderly) that feels that their quality of life is disproportionately affected by development in the community?
> ✓ What do you envision as an ideal future for this community? Are there plans or other documents that describe an overall vision?
>
> Source: Edwards 2000, p.40

7. Company tools

In this chapter three company tools are presented; Corporate Social Responsibility, Global Reporting Initiative and ISO 26000. With the help of these tools the water utilities come to understand their social responsibility and how they can work in a socially responsible manner. These tools also provide guidance on how they can report their performance, in this case social performance, in a transparent manner. One report provides also valuable information on what stakeholders want to know about water utilities.

7.1   Corporate Social Responsibility

No organisation operates in isolation; they interact with employees, customers, suppliers and stakeholders. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is about these interactions, how companies can manage them, in order to produce a positive impact on society while creating revenue at the same time. (Fenn 2013) It should be noted that CSR is a concept which evolves and therefore there is not one way to describe it (Hohnen 2007). IISD (International Institute for Sustainable Development) gives the following definition:

"Generally, CSR is understood to be the way firms integrate social, environmental and economic concerns into their values, culture, decision making, strategy and operations in a transparent and accountable manner and thereby establish better practices within the firm, create wealth and improve society." (Hohnen 2007)

Responsibility and accountability are important concepts of CSR; "CSR means that companies take responsibility and are held accountable for any negative effects caused by them on the environment, on people and society" (Moratis & Cochius 2011).

How a company approaches CSR should start by ensuring that it fully complies with legislation; laws on customers, workers, health and safety, human rights and environmental protection, bribery and corruption, corporate governance and taxation are a base on which other commitment and activities can be built on. There is not a single method how to implement CSR as all firms are different and this changes how they define social responsibility. (Hohnen 2007) Some general practical CSR initiatives are listed below:

- ✓ Develop new environmental and social products and services; innovation brings competitive advantage.
- ✓ Share CSR lessons learned with business customers, business neighbours and fellow members of a trade association or business organization.
- ✓ Explain the environmental, social and economic performance of the business to stakeholders and consider their ideas and views as the business develops.
- ✓ Commit to an external code or standard or a set of business principles that provides a framework to measure progress on environmental, and social and community issues.

Source: Hohnen 2007

What is important in all cases is that CSR needs to be integrated into the heart of the operations such as management and strategy. The progress can be assessed through regular evaluation - what needs to be changed and what should be kept the same – thus continuously improving the CSR performance. The benefits of implementing CSR include for example improved innovation, competitiveness, and reputation, operational efficiency and cost savings, community and customer satisfaction as well as an enhanced ability to react to changes through regular discussions with stakeholders. (Hohnen 2007)

More information can be found, for example, from "Corporate Social Responsibility - An Implementation Guide for Business" by the International Institute for Sustainable Development available at http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2007/csr_guide.pdf

7.2   Global Reporting Initiative

The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) is a non-profit organization which provides a Sustainability Reporting Framework to be used by all companies and organisations (GRI 2013a). The Framework is intended to be a generally used framework for reporting on the economic, environmental, and social performance of a company (GRI 2006). The GRI reporting process has been designed so that all companies, regardless of the size, can use and benefit from it (GRI 2011).

The report should give information on both positive and negative sustainability performance of the company/organisation in question. (GRI 2006) These transparent reports can increase the trust of stakeholders towards the company and towards global economy (GRI 2013a). Around the world companies, public agencies and non-profit organisations use GRI for preparing their CSR reports (Hohnen 2007).

7.2.1   Sustainability Reporting Guidelines

The Sustainability Reporting Guidelines give information on what a report should include and ensure the quality of the reported information (GRI 2006). The current generation of guidelines, G4, is the fourth update (GRI 2013c). There are three categories in the Guidelines: Economic, Environmental and Social. 'Social' category is further divided into subcategories: Labor Practices and Decent Work, Human Rights, Society, and Product Responsibility. (GRI 2013c) The Guidelines are presented in two documents:

> 1   Reporting Principles and Standard Disclosures
> Contains Reporting Principles, Standard Disclosures, and the criteria to be applied by an organisation to prepare its sustainability report 'in accordance' with the Guidelines. Definitions of key terms are also included.
>
> 2   Implementation manual
> Contains explanation of how to apply the Reporting Principles, how to prepare the information to be disclosed, and how to interpret the various concepts in the Guidelines. References to other sources, a glossary and general reporting notes are also included.
>
> Source: GRI 2013c

The GRI reporting process can be presented in five steps: (1) prepare, (2) connect, (3) define, (4) monitor, and (5) report. In these steps the organisation:

> ✓   comes to understand the economic, social, and environmental impacts of its activities;
> ✓   enters into dialogue with stakeholders about these impacts;
> ✓   defines the aspects and indicators that are the most important for reflecting its economic, environmental and social contributions;
> ✓   sets goals;
> ✓   monitors (or prepares to monitor) its results; and
> ✓   communicates all of these steps.
>
> Source: GRI 2011

7.2.2   Other documents provided by GRI; Sustainability Topics for Sectors

In addition to the documents concerning the Guidelines, GRI also provides other documents which can be helpful when reporting on the social issues of a company. For example, GRI has published a document 'Sustainability Topics for Sectors: What do stakeholders want to know?' In this document they present what stakeholders would like to know about different sectors, such as water utilities.

As stated in the report, the topics presented "can be considered as stakeholders' suggestions or requests for topics to be monitored or disclosed by organizations." (GRI 2013d) This list is good to keep in mind when thinking about what stakeholders find important in order to be able to address their possible concerns upfront. The table presenting the topics on water utilities can be found in Appendix 3.

When it comes to water utilities and their social aspects the issues which stakeholders find to be important are water use rights, access to fresh water, access to water, drinking water safety, corruption and local community engagement (GRI 2013d). In Finland the issue which people would most likely be concerned about is drinking water safety. Finnish drinking water is of good quality but there have been a few cases, one quite recently, where drinking water has been accidentally polluted with waste water. These events have raised people's concerns about the safety of drinking water making it as issue which Finnish people want to see more closely monitored.

7.2.3   Other documents provided by GRI; Reporting on Community Impacts

GRI has also conducted a study 'Reporting on Community Impacts' where they have examined how companies have succeeded in reporting their impacts according to the G4 Guidelines. The document provides useful information about the pitfalls of reporting community impacts; it is a good source to see what should be avoided and what the goal is one should strive towards. Listed below are some tips collected from the report:

> ✓ Remember to report both positive and negative contributions.
> ✓ Focus on reporting the changes or benefits occurring for people and the environment as a result of your company's activities - not the performance of the company in relation to community initiatives.
> ✓ Concentrate on performance indicators (see G4 Guidelines) which are most meaningful when it comes to understanding community impact in terms of changes in external conditions - do not only concentrate on the indicators which are easier to measure.
> ✓ Build an understanding of community impact by looking at both social and environmental impacts.
>
> Source: adapted from GRI 2008

More information on GRI, the Guidelines and other documents provided by GRI can be found on their webpage at https://www.globalreporting.org/

7.3   ISO 26000

ISO 26000 is a standard which gives information on how companies and organisations can work in a socially responsible manner (ISO 2013). Unlike some other ISO standards, ISO 26000:2010 is not a management system standard; it cannot be used for certification purposes, regulatory or contractual use. ISO 26000 provides guidance for all types of organisations and encourages them to go beyond legal compliance. It is intended to be used side by side with other instruments and initiatives for social responsibility, complementing, not replacing them. (ISO 2010)

ISO 26000 helps to explain what social responsibility means, how an organisation can work in a socially responsible manner and what best practice in implementing social responsibility is. With its guidance, organisations can transform good intentions into good action. (Frost 2011) In the standard there are seven core subjects addressing social responsibility described (ISO 2010). Each of these core subjects includes an explanation of the contents, the subject, the scope and the grounding principles. They also specify the related actions and expectations of organisations. (Moratis & Cochius 2011) The subjects are listed below.

Social responsibility: 7 core subjects

- ✓ Organisational governance
- ✓ Human rights
- ✓ Labour practices
- ✓ The environment
- ✓ Fair operating practices
- ✓ Consumer issues
- ✓ Community involvement and development

Source: ISO 2010

7.4 Connection between GRI and ISO 26000

GRI Reporting Guidelines and ISO 26000 cover quite a similar list of topics. The overlap of GRI and ISO 26000 is presented in Figure 3. Nearly all the topics have a match in the other framework, with two exceptions; Fair Operating Practices in ISO 26000 is broken down into four categories in GRI (green line) and GRI's Economic –category is suggested to be covered in all the categories in ISO 26000 (orange line) even though they are not directly addressed. (Sustainserv 2011)

GRI

GRI Organizational profile

Economic

Environment

GRI Social categories

Labor Practices

Human Rights

Product Responsibility

Society

ISO 260

Organizational C

Environment

Fair Operating P

Labor Practices

Human Rights

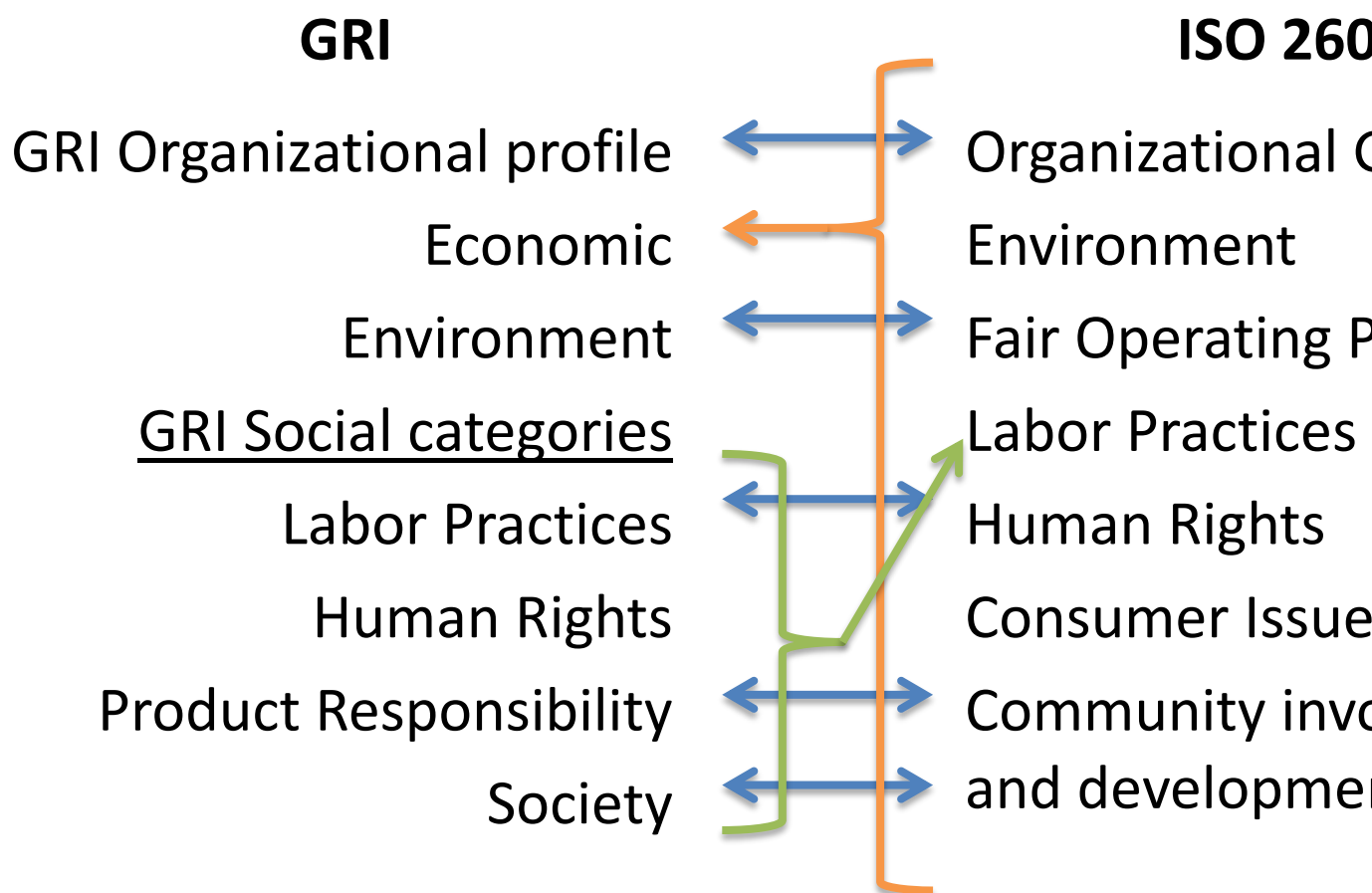Consumer Issue

Community invo

and developmen

Figure 3. Overlap between GRI and ISO 26000 (adapted from Sustainserv 2011).

ISO 26000 helps companies to develop a corporate sustainability program by providing them topics and GRI provides specific performance indicators which companies can use to prepare a transparent, comparable, and consistent sustainability program (Sustainserv 2011).

The report "GRI and ISO 26000: How to use the GRI Guidelines in conjunction with ISO 26000" published by the Global Reporting Initiative explains how these two can be used side by side in order for companies to report their environmental, economic, and social performance. The publication can

be found at https://www.globalreporting.org/resourcelibrary/How-To-Use-the-GRI-Guidelines-In-Conjunction-With-ISO26000.pdf

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