Include Society and Share Knowledge to Improve Policy Choices

**Provide Asset**

**European Funding Programme**
European Commission
Directorate-General for the Environment
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Research expertise – Local Authorities – Social and citizenship expertise
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**Multidisciplinary Approach**
Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a tool to support decision-making and includes methods of democratic and transparent participation. HIA is a systematic process to identify positive and negative impacts of a proposition health and well-being of affected communities. HIA recommendations can support amendments of the preliminary project to achieve health targets as well as equity and sustainability.

The HIA contributed to building scientific evidence of the study area, useful to evaluate the opportunity of doubling the treatment capacity of the municipal solid waste incineration plant, located in Arezzo municipality.

**Build Evidence**

**Environment, Health and Socioeconomic Indicators**
The direct effects of the waste management strategy, centered on incineration, were assessed from an environmental monitoring campaign and the health status at the baseline. Measurements were made for air, soil and noise, and also risks estimates for reproduction, looking at the differences in socio-economic determinants and the differences in the perception of risk were explored through specific questionnaires. Significant differences in some areas of risk perception were highlighted among residents within and outside 4 km far from the plant.

**Engage Stakeholders**
The involvement of the social component was modeled on the basis of the citizen forum of Agenda 21 and adapted to include focus groups of citizens. Stakeholders participation was aimed at developing ownership and commitment to the project objectives in the local administrations and to create close cooperation between scientists, technical agencies and local citizens during the scoping of the project and the knowledge building. The public forums were held to discuss processes, methods and results. In addition, the two focus group sessions with citizen volunteers and open meetings were held to discuss how risk management can contribute to achieve the goal of risk reduction impacts. At each event, participants chose whether to sign-up on registers and provide a contact. Suggestions and criticisms that emerged were included in the final recommendations to decision-makers. A full sharing of the results was realized during the project through leaflets, brochures and the website according to the criteria of transparency.

**Implement Participation**

**Activities with non-expert stakeholders**
Training and information were accomplished during numerous events that were attended by more than 500 participants. The city councilor in charge with the waste responsibility and the technical experts from the public administrations attended meetings and forums, and animated the discussion. Citizens and representatives of risk associations provided their contacts and voluntarily signed on a register during forums and focus groups. Tips and considerations that emerged were included in the final recommendations to decision-makers. The full agreement of the results was carried out during the project through flyers, brochures and website in agreement with transparency criteria.

**Improve Governance**

**Sustainable Development Policy**
The local government authorities regarded the HIA recommendations as the decision about the new plan for waste management. The curbside collection strategy as well as a program of sustainable waste management, including its reduction were implemented to improve the public participation. The HIA process contributed to take a different decision and improve trust among involved parties pursuing the reduction of environmental impacts and the promotion and the protection of health.

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**HIA21 Project AREZZO Case Study**

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**HIA21 - Participatory evaluation of the health, environmental and socioeconomic impact of urban waste treatment**