

Desktop Health Impact Assessment (HIA): reduction of availability of sugar sweetened beverages in Upper Austrian schools

Gabriele Gruber, Elisabeth Türscherl, Sabine Haas (Austrian Public Health Institute / Gesundheit Österreich GmbH)

Main Conclusions:

- Sole reduction of availability of sugar sweetened beverage in primary and secondary schools **does not have any impact** on the daily overall consumption of sugar sweetened beverages of concerned children and adolescents
- Realistic chance to change drinking behaviour of children and adolescents (also outside school) exists if you combine the reduction of availability of sugar sweetened beverages with **supportive measures** like appropriate pedagogical programs

Background

Studies and reviews show that the (over)consumption of sugar sweetened beverages leads to obesity and other diseases like type 2 diabetes among children and adolescents but also among adults. A common strategy to reduce the consumption of sugar sweetened beverages is reducing the availability of these beverages in schools. The research question of the desktop HIA asked whether this strategy would have an impact on the overall consumption of sugar sweetened beverages among pupils in primary and secondary schools in Upper Austria.

Method

Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a systematic process with defined steps.

In the course of this desktop HIA:

- **data** was analysed
- **national and international literature** was researched
- Evidence was discussed in **workshops with experts and players of relevant fields** like Upper Austrian school administration, nutritional science, grocery trade, public health, etc.
- This group assessed the potential positive and negative impacts of an availability reduction of sugar sweetened beverages in primary and secondary schools in Upper Austria and deduced recommendations for improving the strategy

Impact analysis

All parts of the collected evidence (data and literature) were taken into consideration for assessing the potential health impacts of the strategy (reducing the availability of sugar sweetened beverages in primary and secondary schools in Upper Austria). The identified impacts were grouped into three categories:

- individual / lifestyle / behaviour
- socio-economic environment
- school setting

figure: impact analysis

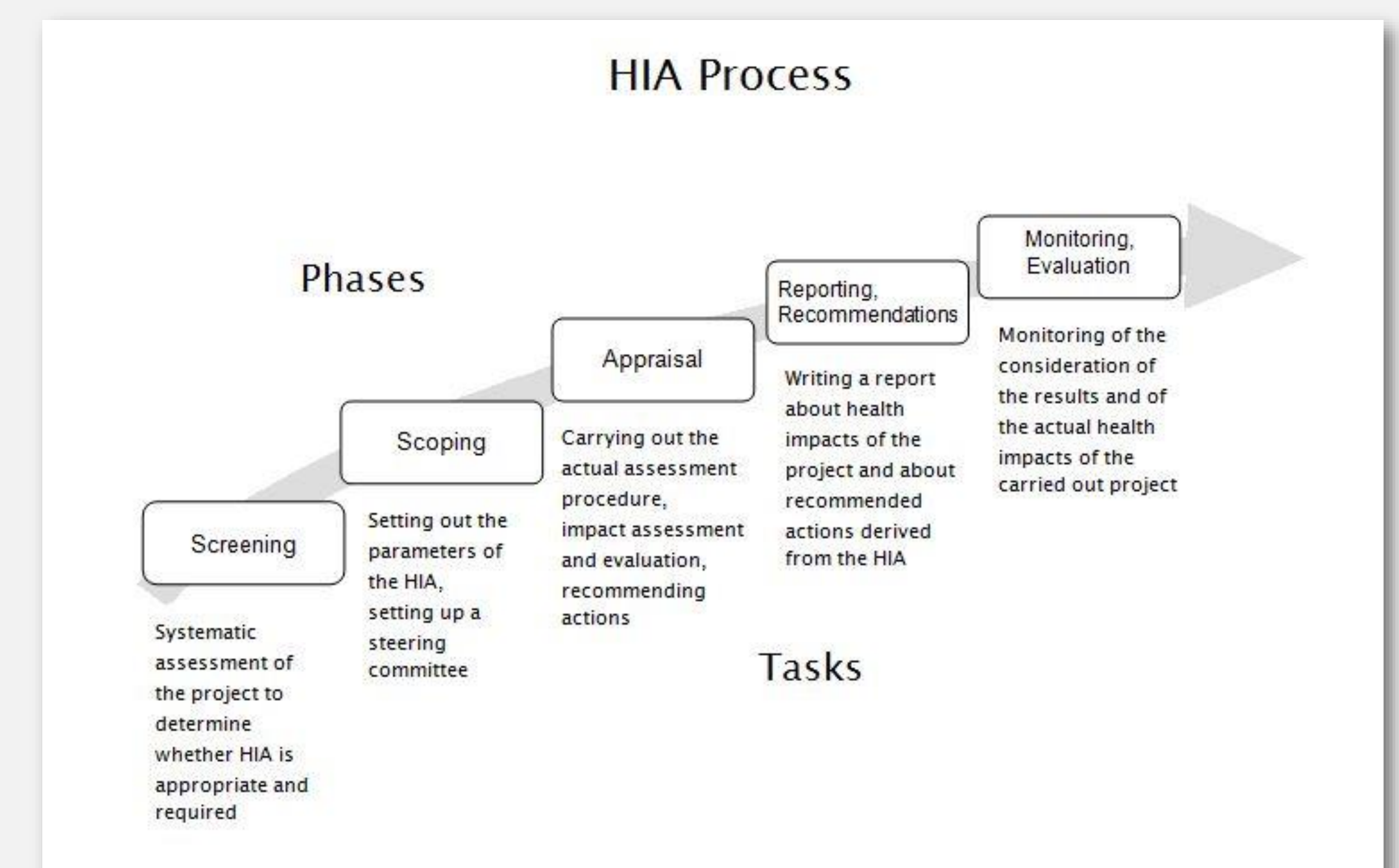
	Identified impacts	Assessment (see legend for colours)
individual / lifestyle / behaviour		
Overweight / Obesity	The strategy has no impact on the overall consumption of sugar sweetened beverages and the related negative consequences on health regarding overweight / obesity	orange
Diabetes	The strategy has no impact on the overall consumption of sugar sweetened beverages and the related negative consequences on health regarding type-2-diabetes	orange
Drinking behaviour	The strategy has no impact on the drinking behaviour of children and adolescents and the related negative consequences on health	orange
socio-economic environment		
Socio-economic background	The strategy has no impact on the overall consumption of sugar sweetened beverages of children and adolescents in poor socio-economic conditions and the related negative consequences on health	orange
school setting		
Sole reduction of availability of sugar sweetened beverage in	The strategy has no impact on the overall consumption of sugar sweetened beverages and the related negative consequences on health	orange
Pedagogical and environment-focused measures	The strategy has a positive impact on the overall consumption of sugar sweetened beverages and the related negative consequences on health if the reduction of availability is combined with supportive pedagogical and environment-focused measures	light green
Guidelines for school buffet operators	The strategy has a positive impact on the overall consumption of sugar sweetened beverages and the related negative consequences on health if guidelines for school buffet operators support the sale of health promoting beverages and food in schools	light green

Colours: dark red = major negative impact (not in table); red = negative impact (not in table); orange = neutral; light green = positive impact; dark green = major positive impact (not in table)

Recommendations

- Combine reduction of availability of sugar sweetened beverages with **supportive measures** like appropriate **pedagogical programs**
→ these programs should be appropriate to the various age groups and should have an interactive design
- Consultation and supervision of the **school buffet operators** to create a health promoting offer of beverages and food
- Cooperation with super markets and grocers in the **school surrounding**
- **Include private surrounding** (families, leisure clubs, ...) of children and adolescents

figure: HIA process – phases and tasks



contact

HIA Support Unit Austria
e-mail: gfa@goeg.at
Website: <http://www.gfa.goeg.at>