

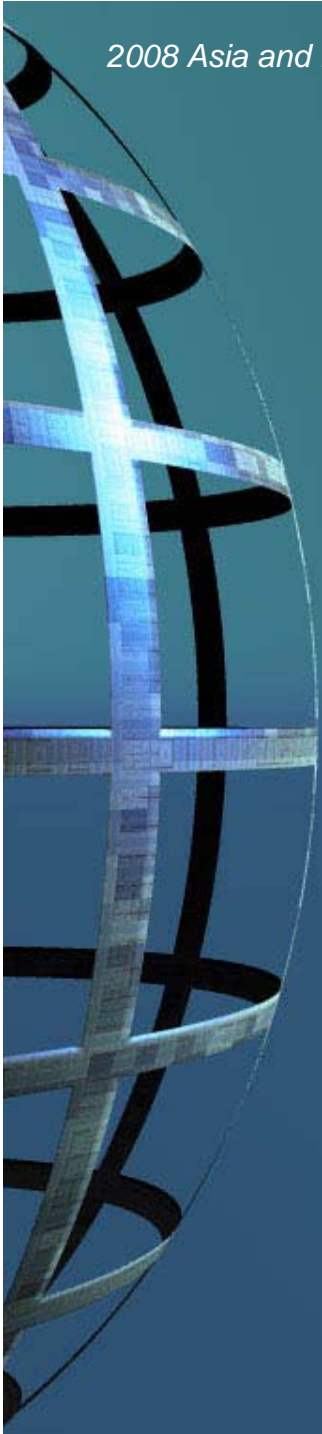
# Future directions in HIA in the Asia-Pacific Region

*a personal (and not very profound!)  
reflection...*

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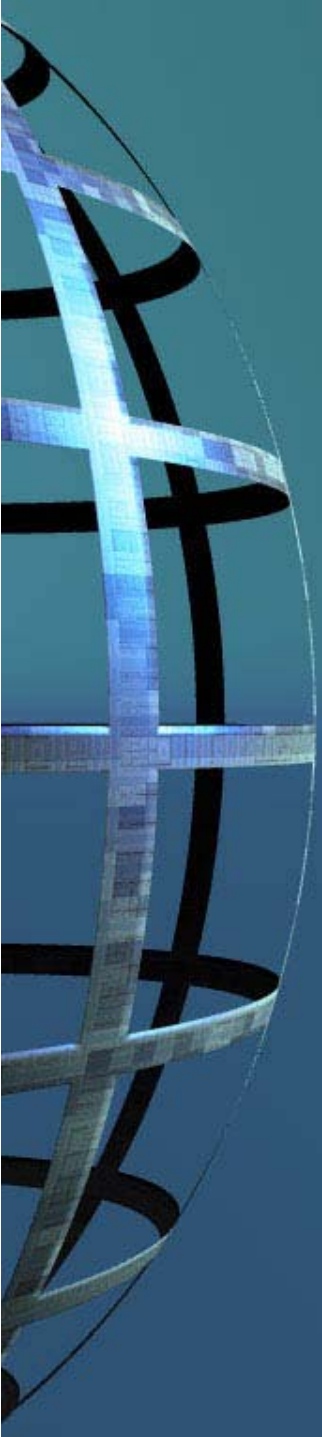
# Key issues..

- Making HIA “fit for purpose”
- Political support, institutionalisation
- Towards better practice



# HIA that is “fit for purpose”

- Countries of Asia Pacific
  - China to Samoa and Maldives
  - variation in size, population, resources, econ development, etc.
  - variation in political systems, decision-making traditions, governance characteristics
  - and so forth

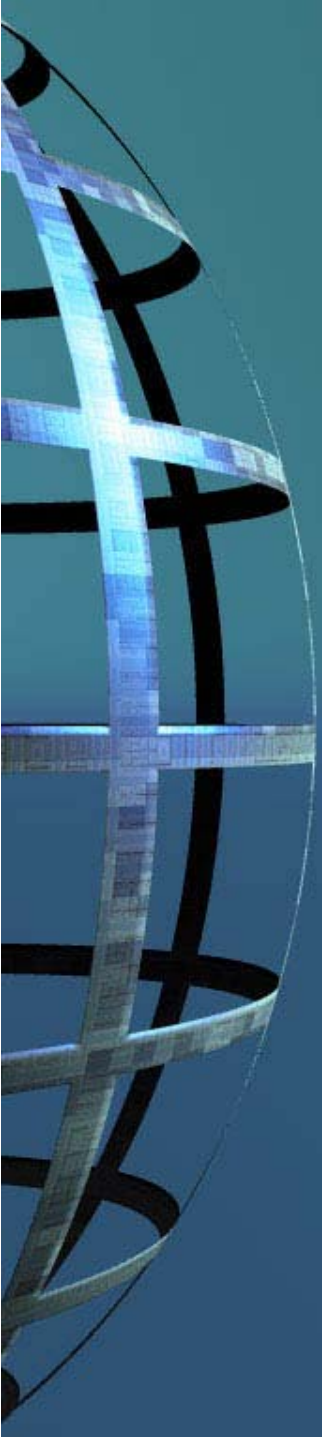
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- Clearly no single model of HIA will suit all countries...
  - “Needs assessment” for HIA..
    - key health issues?
    - what arena and level of decision-making to target?
    - what do we want HIA to achieve?
      - health promotion? prevent adverse health impacts?
    - what resources available to develop HIA?
    - stand-alone? or integrate with EIA or other processes?
  - Each country must answer these and develop a relevant, effective HIA process

e.g. The Thailand HIA journey since 2001...



# Politics, institutionalisation and HIA

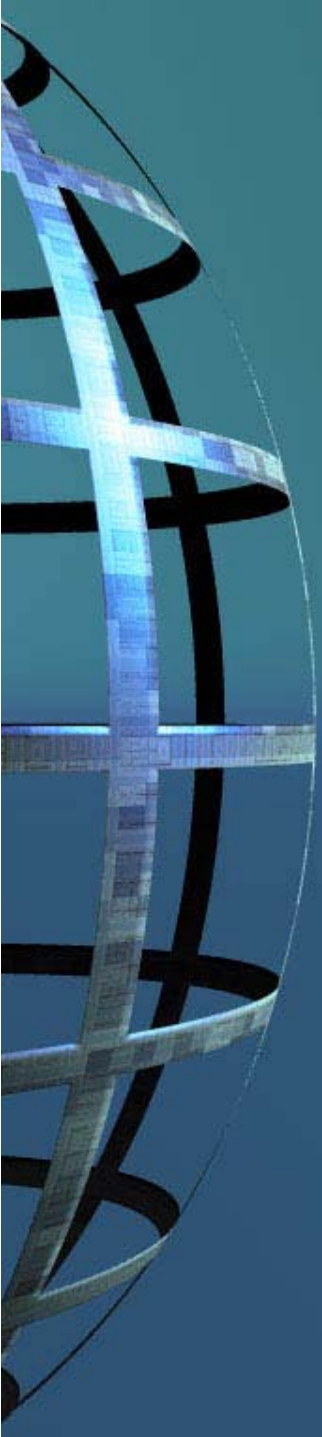
- Public decision-making is political
  - tools such as HIA need political support
- Political environment highly variable!
  - esp. with current economic crisis
- During favourable times, develop broad alliance to support HIA
  - public health organisations, community, NGOs, champions within local and regional government, Universities, etc.
- If local people request HIAs for projects, plans, etc., has more political force than an agency or NGO requesting it

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- Across the region...
    - HIA fortunes will rise or fall in different countries
    - countries where HIA retreating need to draw support from stronger countries until political fortunes change again....
      - practitioner networks, professional forums,..
  - Generally, need new “business case” for HIA in face of immediate economic pressures



# Toward better practice...

- Be clear about main purpose of HIA
  - health promotion, or avoiding impacts?
- Match HIA methods with HIA purpose
  - can't use policy appraisal methods to assess project proposals...
- Social determinants approach is very challenging...
  - need to focus on demonstrable health impacts...reasoned consideration and investigation

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- For projects, usually other forms of impact assessment being carried out
    - don't repeat their work: use it to develop a health perspective
    - don't expect other practitioners to adopt the health focus....they have other values and perspectives to focus on...
  - And do recommend action..
    - avoidance or mitigation measures
    - monitoring and impact management
    - community liaison
    - etc...

# Finally...

- Conference confirmed the need for, value of, HIA...
  - and importance of community empowerment to healthy HIA!
- The HIA message is spreading...
  - but constant need to promote it to decision-makers
- The international networks of HIA practitioners are important
  - share experiences and resources, critique methods, provide mutual support...



Thank you.