RATIONALE, VALUE AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE EVALUATION OF THL

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The National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) started its operations in 2009 (after merger of earlier institutions KTL and STAKES).

THL is a research and development institute under the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (MSAH).

In 2013, the Government made two important decisions concerning THL:

- In March, a special budget cut was decided by the Government, concerning research activities in the institutions under MSAH.
- In September, the Government launched the reform of governmental research institutions. The reform included a significant transfer of funds from the institutions to new research funding instruments to be started in 2014.

The MSAH initiated the evaluation process in 2013 to be done in parallel with the evaluation of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (FIOH).
MAIN TASKS

- The MSAH invited an International Evaluation Group (IEG) to conduct the evaluation.

- The MSAH’s assignment for the IEG was to evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of THL’s activities:
  - Does THL’s work address the key issues in its field with regard to its role as a national institute in the area?
  - Are THL’s objectives and results relevant in this respect with regard to co-operation between research institutes and universities?
  - Is THL’s approach effective?

- The evaluation covered the years 2009-2013 and the future perspective extending until 2020.
The IEG consisted of the following members:

- Jeffrey Koplan, Emory University, Chair (USA)
- Anneli Eteläpelto, University of Jyväskylä (Finland)
- Josep Figueras, European Observatory of Health Systems and Policies (Belgium)
- Johan Fritzell, Centre for Health Equity Studies (Sweden)
- Johan Giesecke, ECDC (EU/Sweden)

THL provided the group with background material.

The IEG had two face-to-face meetings in Helsinki, and met with the staff of THL, its stakeholders, collaborators, and customers.

The report and recommendations of the IEG were published in May 2014.

In June 2014 MSAH aligned how the recommendations must be executed.
MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Despite the budget cuts, minimize damage to the institute’s effectiveness and value
- Upgrade management processes and organization at THL to contemporary levels of performance and expectations
- Performance measurements should be instituted for professional staff and operational units
- Improve the coordination of external requests of MSAH and other Ministries in order to better estimate and control the workload and guarantee the quality of the performance
- Improve the cooperation with the stakeholders
- Consider early dissemination of and access to THL large data sets as a priority responsibility to the broader academic community