

# The Joint Task Force on the Health Aspects of Air Pollution



**The Sixth Joint session of the Steering Body to EMEP and the Working Group  
on Effects; UNECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution**

14-17 September 2020



# 23<sup>rd</sup> Task Force on Health (TFH) meeting

- Held remotely on 12 and 13 May 2020.
- Attended by:
  - 36 representatives from 33 Parties to the Convention
  - The European Union, represented by the European Commission and the European Environment Agency
  - 10 temporary advisors
  - 14 observers

# 23<sup>rd</sup> Task Force on Health meeting

## Main agenda items:

1. National and international policies and processes
2. Country experiences and building capacities on air quality and health
3. Tools on air quality and health
4. Review of the progress in research on health impacts of air pollution
5. Air pollution and health in the times of the COVID-19 pandemic
6. Communication and public health messages on air pollution
7. Current activities and workplan of the Task Force on Health for 2020-2021

# 2020-2021 Workplan

## 1.1. Improving tools to assess air pollution and its effects in the ECE region

### 1.1.1. Monitoring and modelling tools

#### 1.1.1.18. Consolidate existing evidence on health outcomes of exposure to air pollution

- Update of the evidence on the health impact of O<sub>3</sub>, PM, NO<sub>2</sub>, SO<sub>2</sub> and CO;
- *A (scoping) report on emerging issues and methods for health risk/impact assessment of air pollution and cost benefit analysis (pending availability of resources)*

#### 1.1.1.19. Evaluate the current knowledge on the health risk of PAHs and identify critical gaps; assess feasibility of continuing the work under TFH

- Technical report on health risks of PAHs

# Update of the WHO Global Air Quality Guidelines

Table 1.1. The guideline development process at WHO

Stage/primary contributor	Step	Chapter
<b>Planning</b>		
WHO Member State, WHO country office or public/private entity	Request guidance on a topic	1
WHO technical unit	Determine if a guideline is needed; review existing WHO and external guidelines	2
	Obtain approval for guideline development from the director of the relevant technical unit at WHO	2
	Discuss the process with the GRC Secretariat and with other WHO staff with experience in developing guidelines	2
	Form the WHO guideline steering group	3
WHO guideline steering group	Identify sufficient resources; determine the timeline	2
	Draft the scope of the guideline; begin preparing the planning proposal	2,4
	Identify potential members of the GDG and its chair	3
WHO guideline steering group and GDG	Obtain declaration of interests and manage any conflicts of interest among potential GDG members	6
	Formulate key questions in PICO format; prioritize outcomes	5,7
WHO guideline steering group	Finalize the planning proposal and submit it to the GRC for review	4
GRC	Review and approve the planning proposal	4
<b>Development</b>		
Systematic review team	Perform systematic reviews of the evidence for each key question	8
	Evaluate the quality of the evidence for each important outcome, using GRADE as appropriate	9
WHO guideline steering group	Convene a meeting of the GDG	10,11
GDG	Formulate recommendations using the GRADE framework	10,11
WHO steering group	Draft the guideline document	10,11
External review group	Conduct external peer review	12
<b>Publishing and updating</b>		
WHO guideline steering group and editors	Finalize the guideline document; perform copy-editing and technical editing; submit the final guideline to the GRC for review and approval	12
GRC	Review and approve the final guideline	12
WHO guideline steering group and editors	Finalize the layout; proofread	12
	Publish (online and in print as appropriate)	12
WHO technical unit and programme manager	Disseminate, adapt, implement, evaluate	13
WHO technical unit	Update	12

## Timeline of previous meetings:

- September 2016: 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the GDG
- January 2017: guideline proposal approved
- Since 2017: systematic reviews of evidence
- March 2018: 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the GDG
- 2018: risk of bias assessment tool
- June 2019: 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the GDG



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## Meetings in 2020:

- February 2020: 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the GDG
  - adaptation of GRADE framework
  - approach to setting interim targets
  - approach to deriving AQG levels
- June 2020: 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the GDG (virtual)
  - Deriving long and short-term AQG levels
  - Updating the associated interim targets
  - Agreement on the good practice statements on black carbon, ultrafine particles and dust and sand storms



# Update of the WHO Global Air Quality Guidelines

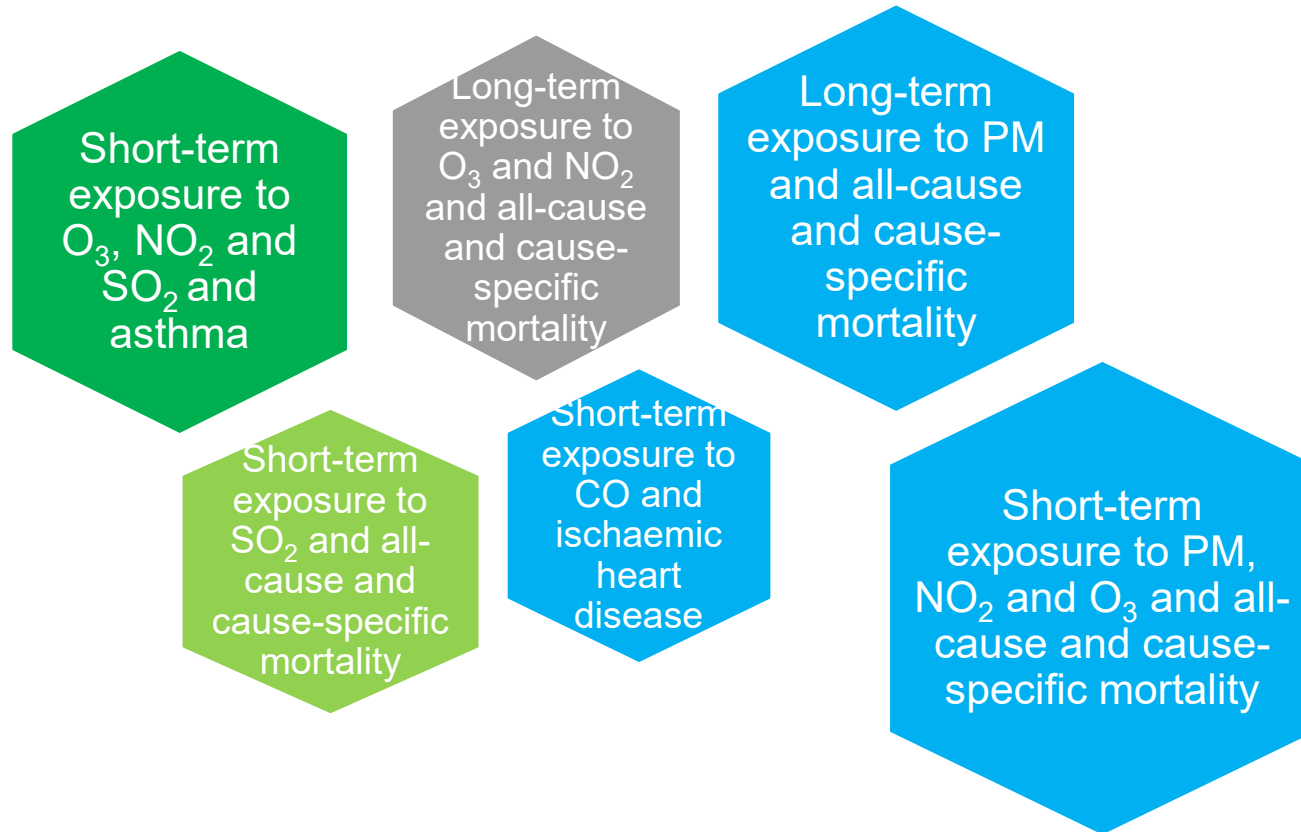
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## Next steps:

- Publication of remaining systematic reviews (on-going)
- Completion of the draft guideline document (on-going)
- Consultation of the draft guideline document
- Finalisation of the guideline documents
- Submission to the WHO GRC for approval

# Systematic reviews of evidence



Special issue:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/environment-international/special-issue/10MTC4W8FXJ>



# 2020-2021 Workplan

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# 2020-2021 Workplan

## PAHs Report

- Initiated in the 2018-2019 workplan.
- Working Group - experts from six Parties to the Convention: Canada, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom.
- WG established to 'Evaluate the current knowledge on the health risk of PAHs and identify critical gaps. Assess whether and to what extent the work on this issue could be continued or not by the Task Force on Health'.
- Report titled: 'Human Health Effects of Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs) as Air Pollutants'.
- Currently a first draft of the report is undergoing technical editing prior to peer-review.
- Expected to finalize the report by end of 2020, to be published in early 2021.

# 2020-2021 Workplan

## 1.2. Cooperation with Parties

### 1.2.2. Capacity-building for the health impact assessment of air pollution at regional and subregional levels

- Development and implementation of the capacity-building curriculum to address different needs.

### Recent training workshops:

- 2018 Sub-regional training for the Western Balkans
- 2019 Sub-regional training for the south Caucasus countries
  - Public health and environmental experts from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia;
  - Delivered in cooperation with UNECE and EEA.
- 2020 Sub-regional training for Central Asia (postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions)



# 2020-2021 Workplan

## 1.3. Cooperation with other projects and bodies (outreach activities)

### 1.3.5. Further develop methodologies for assessment of direct and indirect impacts of long-range transboundary air pollution on human health

- AirQ+ version 2.0 launched in Dec 2019;
- German language version under development;
- New functionalities under development, including an economic module;
- Revision of CaRBonH (Carbon Reduction Benefits on Health) tool.



### 1.3.6. Development of communication strategies for health messages related to air pollution in Europe

- Workshop on communication strategy; postponed until the next physical TFH meeting;
- Regional input to the global activity coordinated by WHO Headquarters.



# Thank you



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- United States Environmental Protection Agency
- Government of the Republic of Korea



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