

The Joint Task Force on the Health Aspects of Air Pollution



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

13-16 September 2021

2020-2021 Workplan & Activities

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 PM, O₃, NO₂, SO₂ 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
Planning		
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
	Identify sufficient resources; determine the timeline	2
WHO guideline steering group	Draft the scope of the guideline; begin preparing the planning proposal	2,4
	Identify potential members of the GDG and its chair	3
	Obtain declaration of interests and manage any conflicts of interest among potential GDG members	6
WHO guideline steering group and GDG	Formulate key questions in PICO format; prioritize outcomes	5,7
WHO guideline steering group GRC	Finalize the planning proposal and submit it to the GRC for review	4
	Review and approve the planning proposal	4
Development		
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
Publishing and updating		
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

- September 2016: 1st meeting of the GDG
- January 2017: guideline proposal approved
- Since 2017: systematic reviews of evidence
- March 2018, June 2019, February and June 2020: meeting of the GDG
- Autumn 2020: External Review of the draft guideline document
- January 2021: Consultation with the GDG
 - Feedback from the external review of the guideline document
 - Discussion on communication and implementation
 - Update on the next steps towards publication of the guidelines
- April-May 2021: WHO GRC for approval
- August-September 2021 : Finalisation of the document for publication



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Next steps

- Launch
 - **Wednesday, 22 September 2021** (press conference)
- Dissemination efforts
 - Executive summary in all WHO official languages
 - Science–policy webinars
 - Resource package to support implementation
 - Communication

Funding support: European Commission; Swiss Federal Office for the Environment; German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety; United States Environmental Protection Agency; Government of the Republic of Korea

2020-2021 Workplan & Activities

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- Technical report on health risks of PAHs

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.
- Objective: 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 entitled: 'Human Health Effects of Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs) as Ambient Air Pollutants'
- Revised draft of the report undergoing final technical editing after peer-review.
- Expected to be published in 4th quarter of 2021

2020-2021 Workplan & Activities

1.2. Cooperation with Parties

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

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

Recent Activities:

- 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;
- 2020-2021 Sub-regional training for Central Asia (postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions);

2020-2021 Workplan & Activities

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

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

Recent Activities:

- AirQ+ version 2.1 launched in May 2021;
 - English, French, German and Russian-language versions developed;
 - New functionalities under development, including an economic module;
- Revision of CaRBonH (Carbon Reduction Benefits on Health) tool - COP 26;
- Regional input to the global activity coordinated by WHO HQ, following expert consultation (on personal level interventions and health messaging)

24th Task Force on Health (TFH) meeting

- Held remotely on 10 and 11 May 2021
- Attended by:
 - 46 representatives from 34 Parties to the Convention
 - the UNECE Air Convention
 - the European Commission
 - the European Environment Agency
 - 18 temporary advisors
 - 12 observers

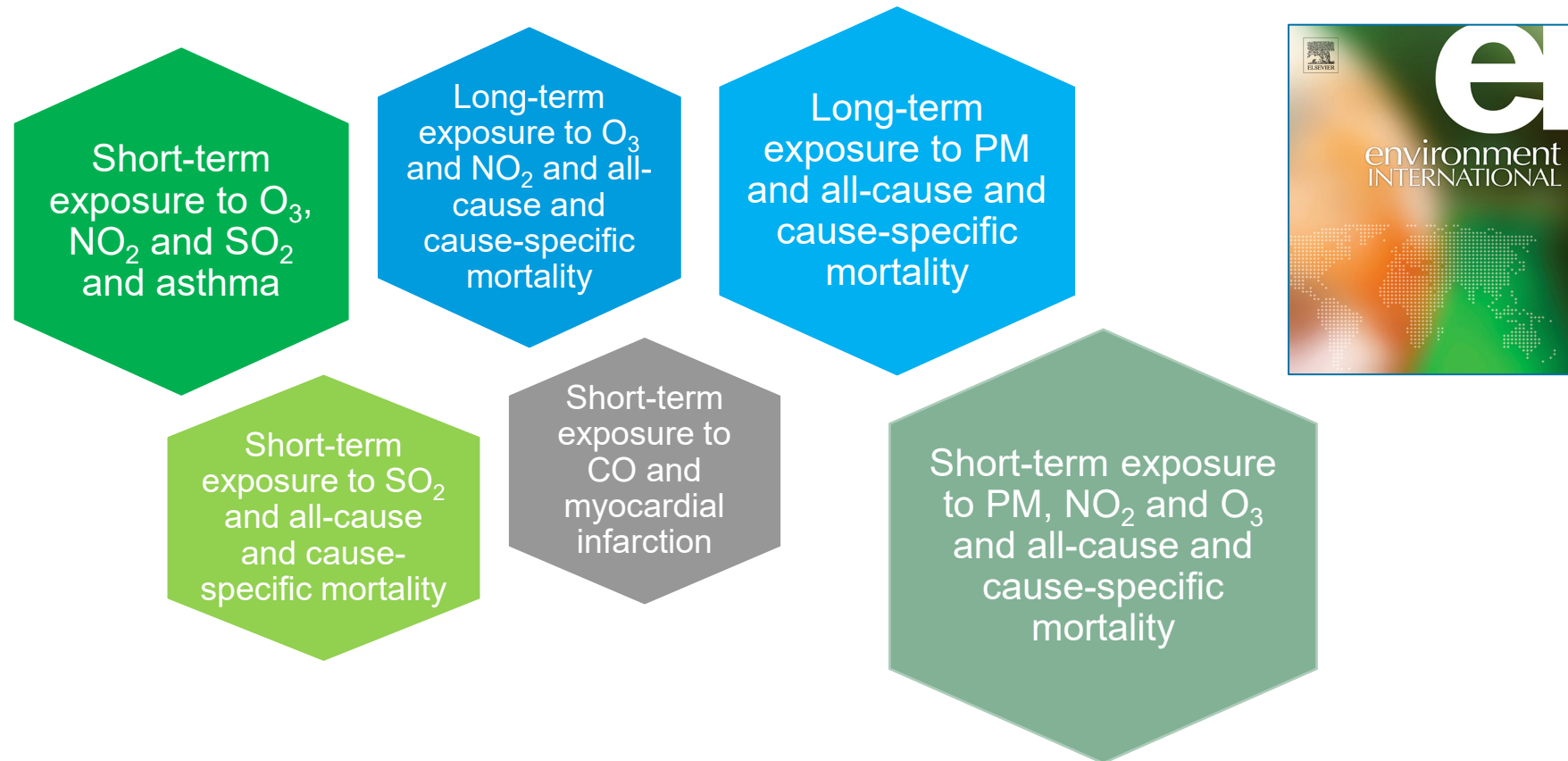
24th Task Force on Health (TFH) meeting

Main agenda items:

1. International policies and processes on air quality and health
2. Update of the WHO Global Air Quality Guidelines: Systematic Reviews
3. Communication and public health messages on air pollution
4. Progress in research on health impacts of air pollution
5. Tools on air quality and health
6. Current activities and workplan of the Task Force on Health for 2022-2023

24th Task Force on Health (TFH) meeting

Dissemination of Systematic Review for Air Quality Guidelines



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

24th Task Force on Health (TFH) meeting

New project for Public Health Message on Air Pollution

Sharing Key Air Pollution and Health Information in Europe – SKAPHIE

- Objective: evaluate the knowledge base and provide advice on personal-level interventions and related public health messages for the European setting
- Basis: WHO global work on personal interventions and communication
- Geographical focus: European Union countries and similar settings
- Context: COVID-19 pandemic and the Green Deal

24th Task Force on Health (TFH) meeting

Proposals for 2022-2023 workplan

- 1. Consolidate existing evidence on the health outcomes of exposure to air pollution**
 - A report on methods for health risk/impact assessment of air pollution and cost-benefit analysis (update to HRAPIE project)
 - An overview on air pollution and COVID-19 (optional, pending resources)
- 2. Further develop methodologies for assessment of direct and indirect impacts of long-range transboundary air pollution on human health**
 - Update of tools for quantification of the health impacts of air pollution, including links to climate change mitigation
 - Assessment of health co-benefits and trade-offs between climate change and clean air agendas (optional, pending resources)

24th Task Force on Health (TFH) meeting

Proposals for 2022-2023 workplan

3. **Contribute to the review of the Gothenburg Protocol**
 - Thematic input to the review of the Gothenburg Protocol
4. **Capacity-building on the health impact assessment of air pollution at the regional and subregional levels**
 - Development and implementation of capacity-building curriculum to address different needs
5. **Promote health messages related to air pollution in Europe**
 - Formulation of health messages in air pollution, including on personal-level interventions
 - Workshop on risk communication, including for medical professionals, on health messages related to air pollution to the public and at individual level

Thank you



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