Summary of current work on methane as an ozone precursor

Including results from TFHTAP, CCAC, EC-JRC, TFMM/CAMS, MSC-W, and CIAM

9th Joint Session of the EMEP Steering Body and the Working Group on Effects
Geneva, September 11-15, 2023

Introduction

- A large body of work over the past ~20 years has shown the importance of methane as an ozone precursor
- Recent work from within and outside the Convention on the relevance of methane for achieving the Convention's goals is difficult to synthesise:
  - Different emission scenarios
  - Different modelling approaches
  - Different base years
  - Different impact metrics
  - Etc…
- This presentation identifies common messages from the five most relevant studies since 2018
  - TFHTAP, CCAC, EC-JRC, TFMM/CAMS, MSC-W, and CIAM
- Key questions:
  - What is the impact of methane on ground-level ozone in the UNECE region compared with the impact of NOx and NMVOC?
  - How big is the potential of methane emission reductions in the UNECE region to reduce ground-level ozone compared with methane emission reductions in the rest of the world?
  - What future work is needed to quantify the influence of all ozone precursors and inform the negotiations on the potential revision of the Gothenburg Protocol?
  - What additional scenarios would be useful to perform this work?

Ozone - impact of future emission policy

Action on methane would only be part of the solution; NOx/VOC emission reductions would still be very important to reduce surface O_3

- **Baseline**
  - Average ozone concentrations in Europe will **increase** by 2-5% between 2015 and 2050. Peak season MDA8 will be **reduced** around 5-10%. In both cases, CH_4 emission increase in the baseline scenario hampers the reductions expected from NOx/VOC declines

- **From 2015 baseline to 2050 LOW** (including global 50% CH_4 emission reduction) would:
  - **Reduce** average ozone concentrations by around 15% and peak season MDA8 by around 25%
  - About 20% of the annual mean ozone reduction is driven by reductions in CH_4, compared to only 12% for peak season MDA8
  - For ozone mean, transcontinental non-CH_4 sources dominate over European sources, whilst for peak season MDA8 European non-CH_4 sources dominate

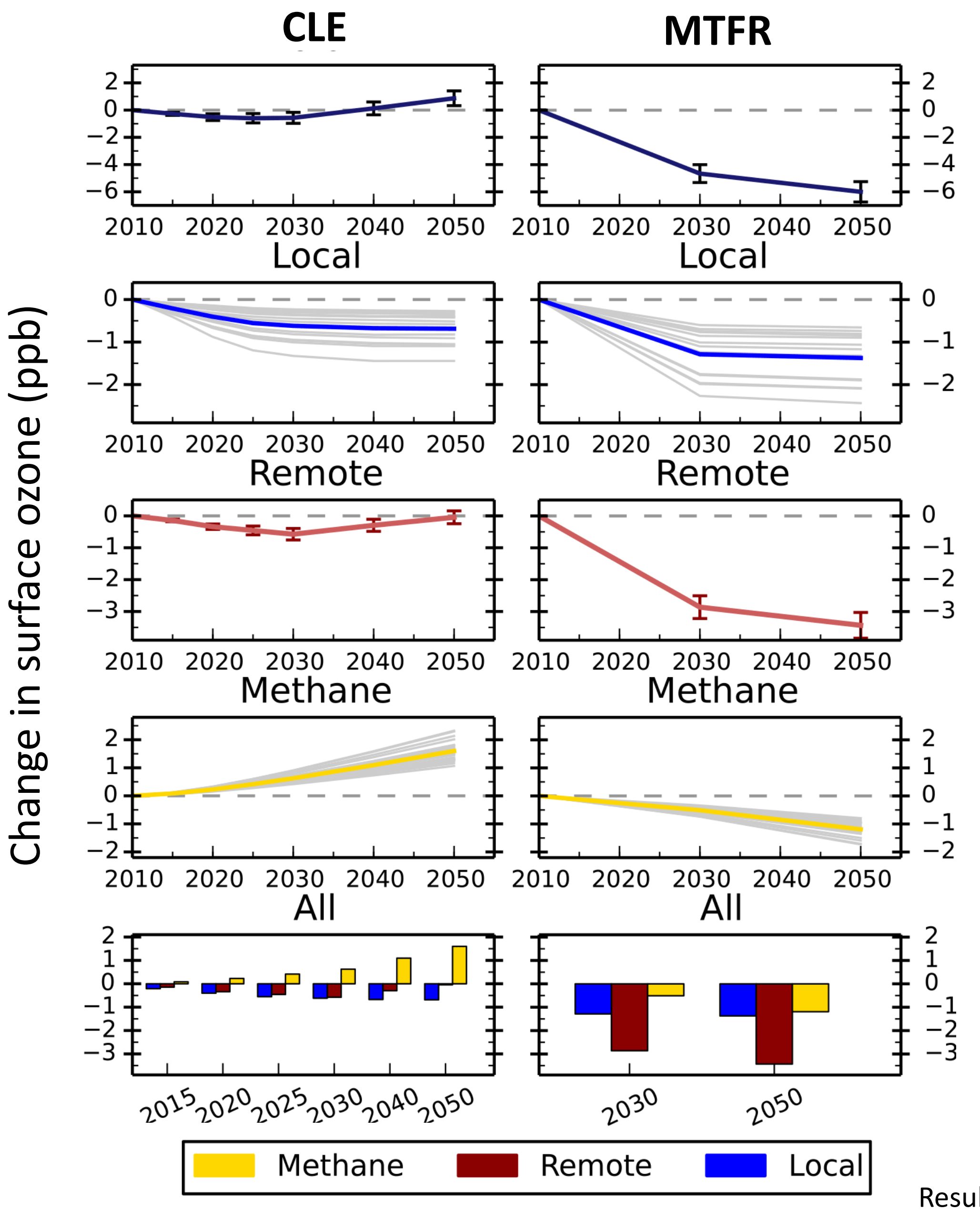
- **The difference between the 2050 CLE and 2050 LOW** scenarios can be attributed to roughly ⅓ from reduction in global methane emissions, ⅓ from reduction in European precursor emissions and ⅓ from reduction of precursor emissions outside Europe, both for ozone mean and peak season MDA8

- CIAM estimates that methane emissions can be reduced (in the UNECE region) by almost 70% between 2015 and 2050, when **dietary change** and livestock reductions are included (2050 LOW scenario)

2050 LOW scenario - Ambitious global action on air pollution and methane, including non-technical measures

Based on TFHTAP/TFMM/MSC-W/CIAM work

TFHTAP contribution to the review of the Gothenburg Protocol (2021)



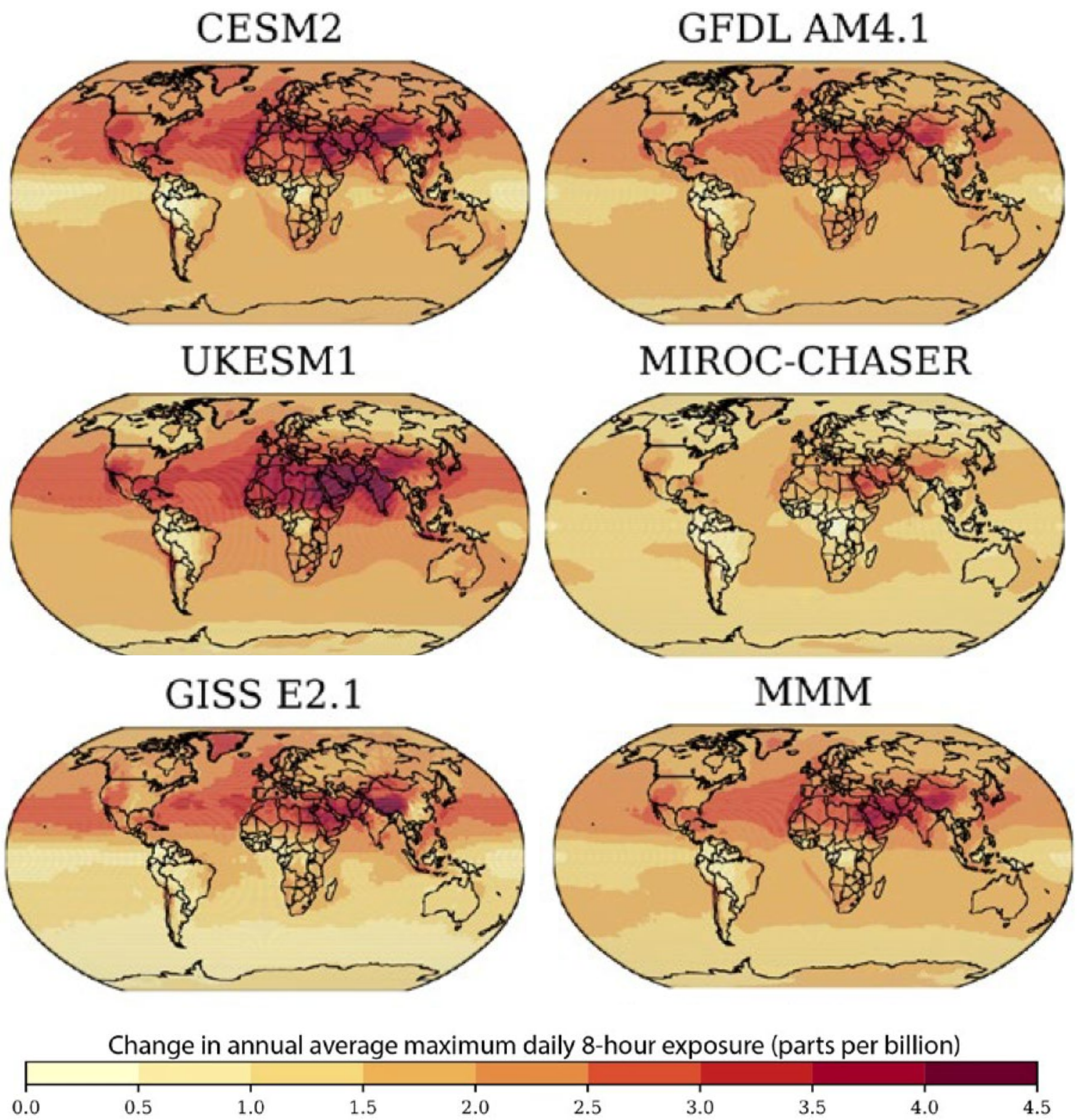
- Annual average surface ozone in Europe
- Ensemble of 14 global chemical transport models

- ECLIPSE 5a scenarios
  - CLE: global increase in methane offsets effects of European NOx/NMVOC controls on surface ozone
  - MTFR: large reductions in surface ozone due to combined effects of methane, local NOx/NMVOC and remote NOx/NMVOC
- What if: MTFR for NOx/NMVOC but CLE for methane?
  - Possibly a 30-50% smaller reduction in 2050 ozone for Europe

- Significant inter-model spread
  - Range in the methane response is similar to the magnitude of the response
  - This shows the importance of using a large ensemble of models

Results from Turnock et al. (2018) https://doi.org/10.5194/acp-18-8953-2018

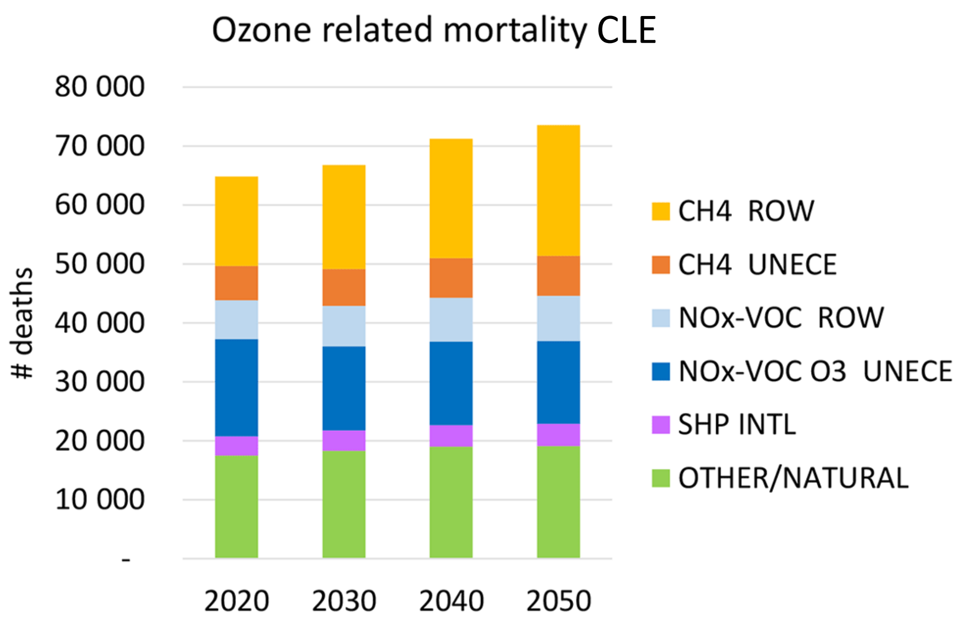
UNEP/CCAC Global Methane Assessment (2021)

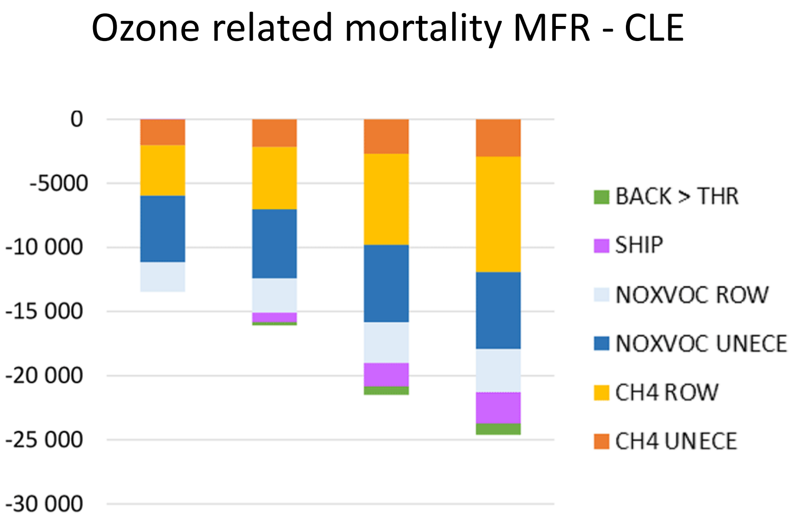


- Annual average global MDA8
- Ensemble of 5 global chemistry-climate models
- 50% reduction in global anthropogenic methane emissions
  - Corresponds to a 30% reduction in methane concentration
- NOx/NMVOC held constant at 2015 levels
- Ozone response in Europe (Germany): 3-6 ug/m3
- Range in the ozone response due to model spread
  - This shows the importance of using a large ensemble of models

Based on Fig. 3.2 of https://www.ccacoalition.org/resources/global-methane-assessment-full-report

Results from the European Commission JRC (2023)

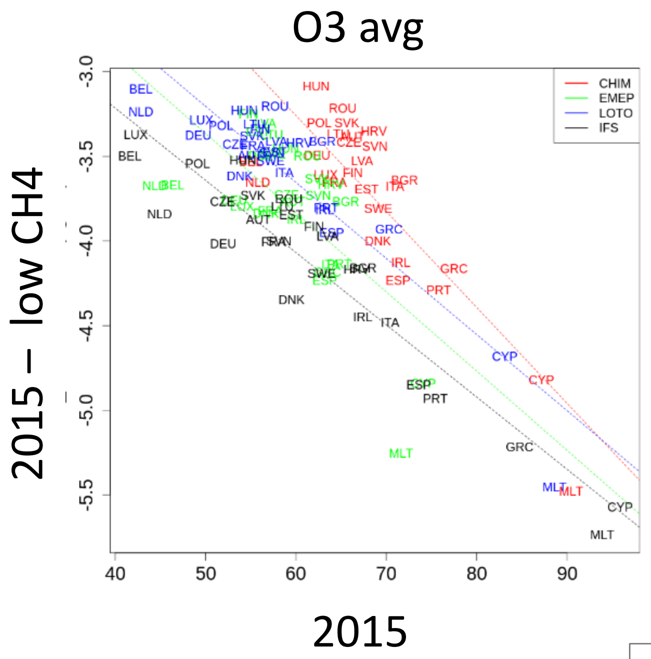


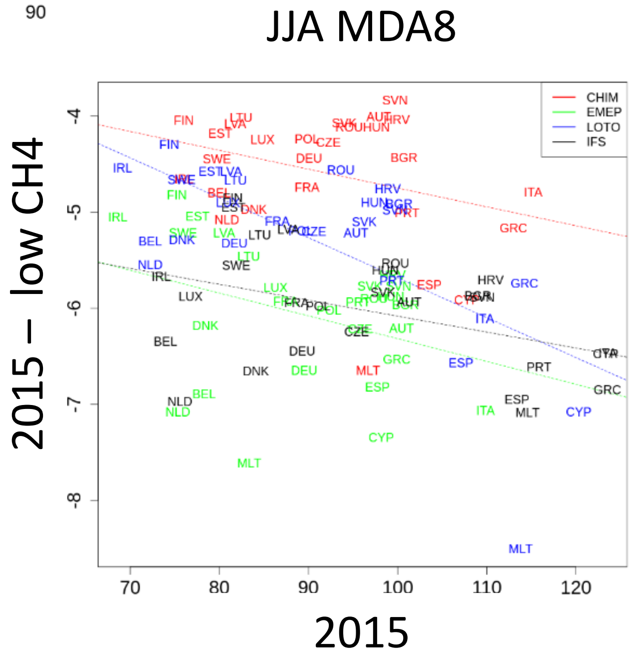


- Ozone related mortality in UNECE (incl. N.Am.)
- Results from TM5-FASST
  - Single model (TM5): no assessment of model spread
- ECLIPSE 6b scenarios
  - CLE: ozone-related mortality increases due to ROW methane
  - MFR: large reductions in ozone-related mortality due to combined effects of methane, local NOx/NMVOC and remote NOx/NMVOC
- Role of methane:
  - About half of the difference in ozone related mortality between CLE and MFR is attributed to methane
  - The UNECE (incl. N.Am.) contribution to the required methane reductions is small

Based on Figs. 4 and 9 of Belis and van Dingenen (2023) https://doi.org/10.5194/acp-23-8225-2023

Results from TFMM/CAMS71 (2023)

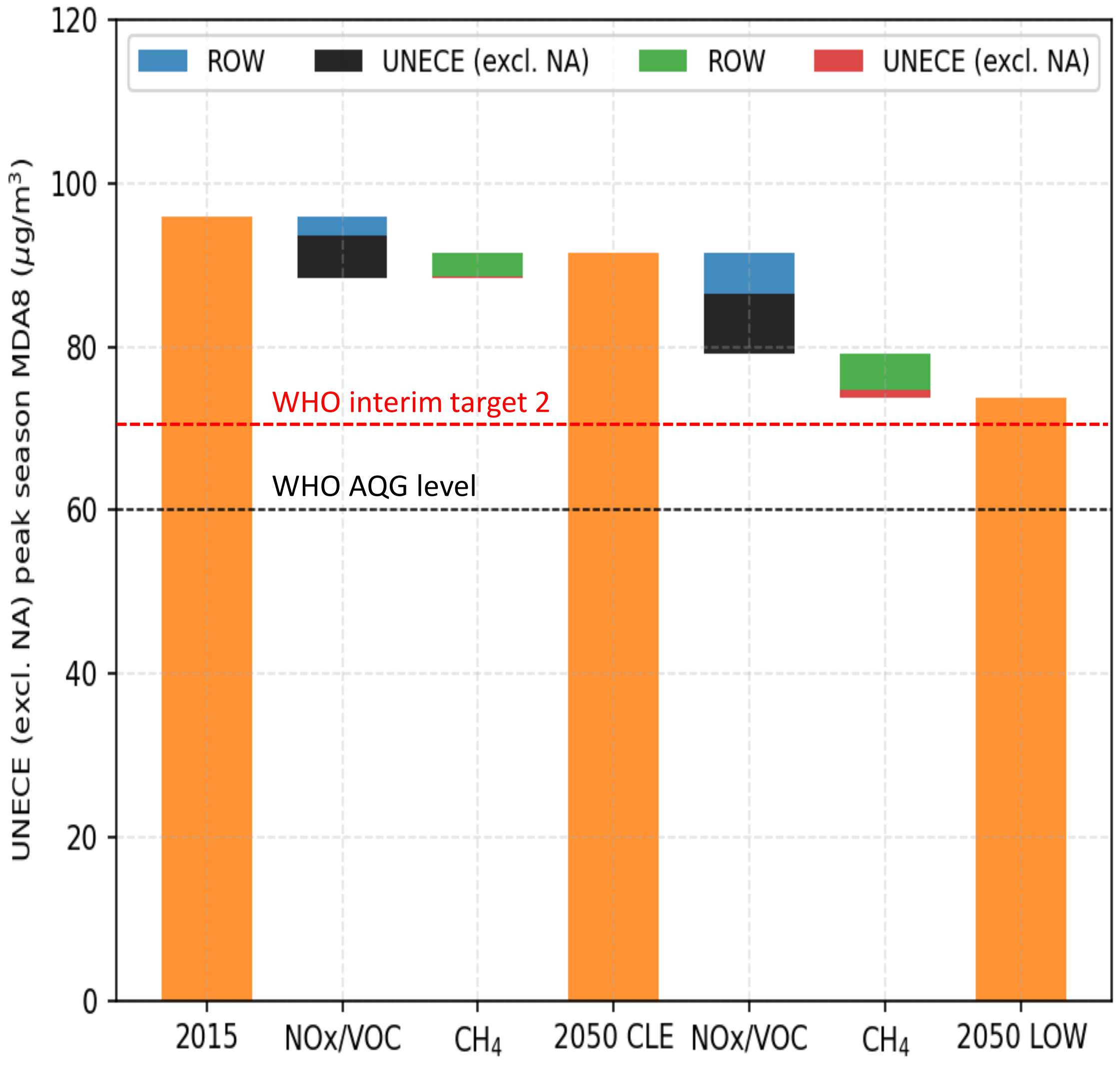




- Setup
  - Ensemble of 3 regional chemical transport models
  - Boundary conditions from a single global model
  - CH4: scenarios: -30% conc. 2050 compared to 2015
  - O3 annual avg and peaks (summer average MDA8)
- Results
  - 30% of the difference between CLE and MFR in 2050 is due to CH_4, the rest is NOX/VOC (not shown here)
  - The impact of CH4 is larger for ozone peaks than for ozone average in absolute terms, but similar in percentages
- Discussion
  - The model spread is more important for ozone peaks than annual average, emphasizing the need for multi-model approach
  - The overall conclusions are converging: the impact derived from global models for annual mean could apply for ozone peaks

Results from A. Colette, as presented to TFHTAP on 20.04.2023,
https://policy.atmosphere.copernicus.eu/reports/CAMS2_71_2021SC1-1_D4.1.1-2022P2_AQProjections_202211_v1.1.pdf

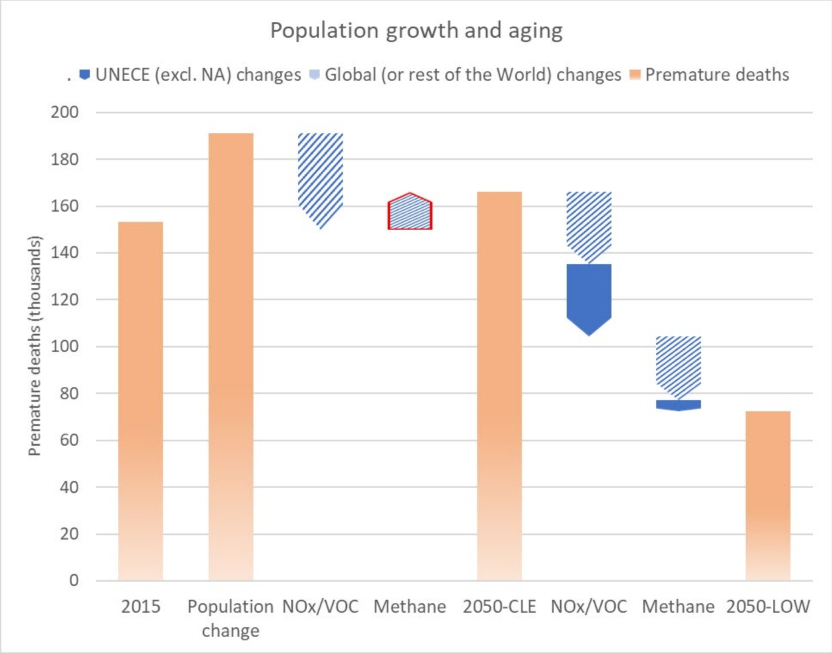
New work from MSC-W (2023)

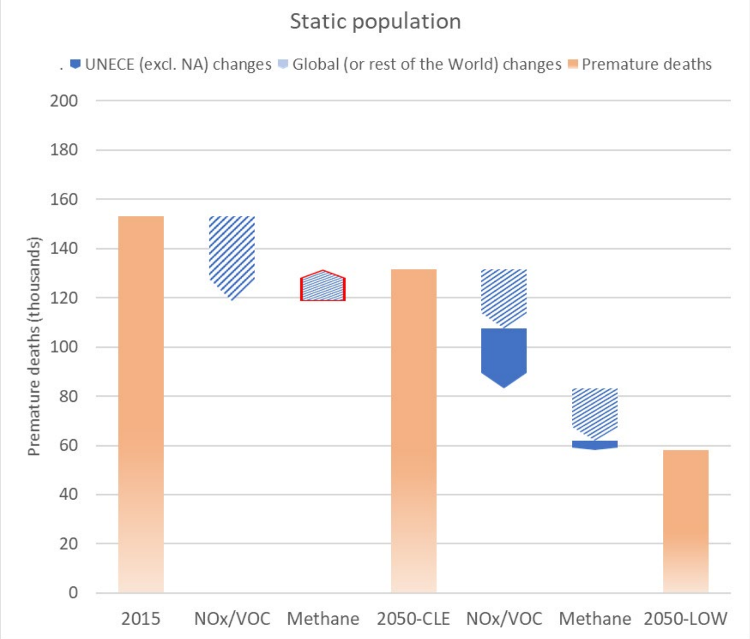


Results from H. Fagerli (personal communication)

- EMEP model run by MSC-W
  - Single model: no assessment of model spread
- New scenarios from GAINS
  - CLE: global increase in methane offsets effects of NOx/NMVOC controls on surface ozone
  - LOW: large reductions in surface ozone due to combined effects of methane, local NOx/NMVOC and remote NOx/NMVOC
- Peak season WHO ozone guideline not attained under any scenario
  - Deep reductions in all precursors required to approach the interim target value
  - UNECE NOx/NMVOC reductions have the largest effect
- Effect of methane:
  - WHO AQG are more difficult to reach without large global methane reductions
  - The UNECE (excl. N.Am.) contribution to the required methane reductions is small

Health impact assessment from GAINS (2023)





- Based on results from MSC-W
- Premature deaths in the UNECE (excl. N.Am.)
- Population changes increase ozone-related mortality in all scenarios
  - Also increases the benefit of 2050 LOW compared with 2050 CLE
- Benefit of 2050 LOW compared with 2050 CLE
  - Largest single contribution: UNECE (excl. N.Am.) NOx/NMVOC
  - Non-UNECE sources (incl. methane) outweigh UNECE sources
  - Methane reductions contribute about 1/3rd
  - UNECE part of the methane contribution is small
- Global cooperation needed to reach this ozone target

Summary / future work

- Despite different methodologies in each study, some key results emerge:
  - Reductions in European NOx and NMVOC emissions remain the most important tool for reducing peak season ozone in Europe
  - Projected global methane increases will (at least partially) offset the effects of these reductions in NOx and NMVOC
  - Global reductions in methane emissions are needed to meet ozone-related air quality targets
  - The potential UNECE contribution to the required reduction in global methane emissions is small compared to the reductions required from the rest of the world

- Requirements for additional scenarios:
  - A scenario representing high ambition on NOx/NMVOC but low ambition on methane would be useful
  - We might also like to consider scenarios with regionally differentiated ambition on NOx/NMVOC/CH4
- Requirements for future quantitative assessments of methane as an ozone precursor:
  - An ensemble of global and regional models, including the EMEP model
  - Consistent experimental setup and output metrics, including impacts

- Relevant items from the 2024-2025 draft workplan
  - 1.1.1.7, 1.1.3.1, 1.1.3.2, 1.1.3.4, 1.1.4.2

Relevant items from the 2024-2025 draft workplan

1.1.1.7	On basis of recent evidence, long-term trends and uncertainty in future projections, provide insight into robustness of modelled long-term O_3 projections in relation to CH_4 mitigation	Synthesis of O_3 mitigation options	TFMM, MSC-W, TFHTAP	EMEP budget
1.1.2.1	Investigate practicalities and processes required for including CH_4 in annual emissions inventory reporting	Status report (2024)	TFEIP, CEIP	Additional resources required
1.1.3.1	Contribute to Gothenburg Protocol revision as mandated by Executive Body	Pending decision by Executive Body in December 2023	TFIAM, CIAM, TFMM, MSC-W, CCC, TFHTAP, CCE	EMEP budget and recommended contributions
1.1.3.2	Support policy process with scenario analyses	Calculation and analysis of scenarios	CIAM, MSC-W, TFHTAP, TFIAM	
1.1.3.4	Integrate knowledge from science bodies in integrated assessment framework and support policy process with scenario analyses	Specification of "optimized scenarios", "optimized and equity scenario", "ozone precursor scenarios", "health in cities scenarios"	CIAM, MSC-W, TFHTAP, TFIAM	Additional resources required
1.1.4.2	Organize new global and regional model simulations of historical trends and future scenarios for Gothenburg Protocol pollutants	Initial findings assessment (2025)	TFHTAP, TFMM	Parties' in-kind contributions
1.2.3	Regular coordination with task forces and expert groups on CH_4, O_3, N	Meeting notes	TFIAM, TFHTAP, TF-Health, TFRN, FICAP	