

On the Way to Clean Air

The Capacity-Building Programme under
the Convention on Long-range
Transboundary Air Pollution in Eastern Europe,
the Caucasus and Central Asia



UNECE

More information

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Note

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Introduction

Air pollutant emissions have been considerably reduced in the UNECE region over the last decades and this is in part a result of integrated air pollution management strategies that were developed jointly under the UNECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution and its protocols. However, progress has also been uneven as the increase in energy production, industry growth and urban development have raised emissions in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Active involvement of all UNECE countries, including those in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, is critical for achieving the objectives of the Convention and its protocols. As outlined in the updated Long-Term Strategy (ECE/EB.AIR/142/Add.2, decision 2018/5, annex)¹, the highest priority for work under the Convention is to maximize its impact in order to meet the objectives of the three most recent protocols as amended². Increased ratification and implementation of these protocols are of central importance in the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The continuing efforts to raise awareness, particularly at the political level, of the need to improve air quality and the benefits of ratifying the protocols, is vital to the success of the Convention. Capacity-building in order to enhance skills; increase understanding of the provisions of the protocols; improve the use of existing capacity; share lessons learned; and transfer knowledge related to air pollution monitoring, national emission inventories and projections and abatement strategies will remain a key focus so that countries, particularly in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, can adopt the best available techniques and implement emission reduction commitments. This will, in turn, also contribute to the achievement of a number of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular, SDG 3 on good health and well-being, SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities and SDG 12 on sustainable consumption and production.

Capacity-building activities to facilitate ratification and implementation of the Convention and its protocols have been an important area of work under the Convention for a number of years. As such, a comprehensive capacity-building programme was developed in 2014. The programme was designed in line with the strategic priorities of the Convention and with the needs expressed by target countries. The programme is managed by the Convention's secretariat and funded by several Parties, in particular: the European Union, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden and Switzerland.

The implementation of the programme has already led to tangible results, which will be presented in the following.

¹ See: http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2018/Air/EB/Decision_2018_5.pdf

² The Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone (Gothenburg Protocol); the Protocol on Heavy Metals; and the Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants (Aarhus Protocols).

The Capacity-Building Programme

In accordance with the needs expressed by countries, three main types of activities have been supported under the programme: analysis of national legislation, support to the development of emission inventories, and support to the participation in the Convention's activities and awareness-raising.

National legislation analyses

In order to assist countries in increasing their understanding of the provisions of the Convention and its protocols, the secretariat has organized national legislation analyses. The objective of these analyses is to find out whether the current legislation on air quality assessment and management is sufficient in order for the country to ratify and implement the Convention and its protocols. The analysis provides recommendations on possible adjustments in the national legislation that are necessary for the country to be able to effectively implement the requirements of the protocols, and on possible next steps towards ratification. The results of the legislation analysis are usually discussed at roundtable events with a broad range of national stakeholders, including high-level participation from Ministries.

Support to emission reporting

Understanding what the emission sources are and how emissions develop over a certain time span in a given country is essential for clean air policy development. Emission inventories provide information about emission sources. Reporting emission inventories in the framework of the Convention is also a basic obligation for Parties that ensures the proper functioning of the agreement. Emission inventories are key for compliance monitoring, modelling and policy development under the Convention. In order to assist countries in developing and further improving their national emission inventories, the secretariat has organized training workshops for national experts. The workshops train the experts on basic reporting requirements in the standard reporting format under the Convention (Nomenclature for Reporting – NFR), key aspects pertaining to the structure of Informative Inventory Reports³, emissions gridding, reporting of large point sources, and emission projections and scenarios.

Support to participation in the Convention's activities, subregional workshops and awareness-raising activities

In order to increase active involvement of experts from countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, the secretariat has facilitated the participation of delegates and experts from the region in the meetings and activities under the Convention, including in targeted subregional workshops on modelling and on Best Available Techniques.

To raise awareness among decision-makers in the region of the effects of air pollution and the benefits of joining the Convention and its protocols, the secretariat has actively participated in high-level meetings and promoted the Convention through outreach and communication activities.

³ A methodology report which should provide enough detail to explain the approach and input data that has been used.

Status of Ratification, Challenges and Further Needs

Countries in the region are moving at different speeds and have different needs in air quality assessment and management. Currently, out of eleven countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, eight are Parties to the Convention. Few countries are Parties to the protocols to the Convention, the instruments setting concrete emission reduction obligations for different pollutants.

According to a survey which the secretariat developed in 2018, Parties identified a number of key barriers for ratification of the Convention's latest protocols. One of the barriers is long-term uncertainty in financing, which is in some cases driven by institutional instability, and in some cases a result of air quality management being a low priority in countries. Some countries face challenges financing laboratories, while others face challenges financing modern monitoring techniques. Meanwhile, others face challenges in finding financing opportunities for investment in clean technologies. There is a lack of capacity and expertise on many levels of air pollution research and policy. The lack of awareness exists on different levels of society. Politicians, industrial stakeholders, and the general public are all – to a varying extent – not sufficiently aware of the benefits of improved air quality.

At a workshop organized by Sweden⁴, Parties also identified areas for further assistance that are tailored to specific needs. For example, raising awareness on air pollution and the Convention's profile at all levels, providing support to countries in developing regulation based on Best Available Techniques, strengthening of support to capacity-building and training activities, and in decision support analysis (e.g. cost-benefit analysis (CBA) and Health Impact Assessments (HIA)).

⁴ Sixth Saltjöbaden workshop entitled "Clean Air for a Sustainable Future – Goals and Challenges" (Gothenburg, Sweden, March 2018)

	1979 CLRTAP	1984 EMEP	1985 Sulphur	1988 NOx	1991 VOCs	1994 Sulphur	1998 HM	1998 POPs	1999 GP
Armenia	1997	2014	–	–	–	–	1998 (S)	1998 (S)	1999 (S)
Azerbaijan	2002	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Belarus	1980	1985	1986	1989	–	–	–	–	–
Georgia	1999	2013	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Kazakhstan	2001	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Kyrgyzstan	2000	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Republic of Moldova	1995	2016	–	–	–	–	2002	2002	2000 (S)
Tajikistan	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Turkmenistan	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Ukraine	1980	1985	1986	1989	1991 (S)	1994 (S)	1998 (S)	1998 (S)	–
Uzbekistan	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Table 1: Status of ratification of the Convention and its protocols. Where a year is followed by (S), the Party has signed, but not yet ratified the protocol.

1979 CLRTAP: Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution

1984 EMEP: Protocol on Long-term Financing of the Cooperative Programme for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Long-range Transmission of Air Pollutants in Europe (EMEP)

1985 Sulphur: Protocol on the Reduction of Sulphur Emissions or their Transboundary Fluxes by at least 30 per cent

1988 NOx: Protocol concerning the Control of Nitrogen Oxides or their Transboundary Fluxes

1991 VOCs: Protocol concerning the Control of Emissions of Volatile Organic Compounds or their Transboundary Fluxes

1994 Sulphur: Protocol on Further Reduction of Sulphur Emissions

1998 HM: Protocol on Heavy Metals and its 2012 amended version

1998 POPs: Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and its 2009 amended version

1999 GP: Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone and its 2012 amended version

Implementation of the Programme and Results

Support to adjusting national legislation and developing emission inventories

Armenia



A Party to the Convention and the EMEP Protocol, Armenia intends to ratify the three most recent protocols as amended. To support Armenia's efforts, several workshops on developing national emission inventories have been organized. In 2015, the workshop covered reporting requirements, an overview of the national inventory system, an introduction to the Informative Inventory Report, and key category analysis. Follow-up workshops in 2016 and 2018 focused on improving the existing inventory and the Informative Inventory Report. More specifically, the workshops focused on the calculation of emissions from stationary fuel combustion, industrial processes (mining, non-ferrous metals and cement) and from product use. As a result of the workshops, the quality of Armenia's emission reporting has improved. In addition to this, Armenia submitted its first Informative Inventory Report in 2018, facilitating an in-depth review of emission inventories. Armenia has also taken steps to develop a new ambient air protection law to create the legislative basis for fulfilling obligations required by the protocols. The new law should include a provision on the mechanism for introducing Best Available Techniques.

Azerbaijan



Azerbaijan has been a Party to the Convention since 2002 but has not yet ratified any of its protocols. In response to the need expressed by the Government, an introductory workshop on emission inventories was organized in 2014, which specifically focused on the energy sector. A follow-up workshop to assist Azerbaijan in further improving its emission inventories was held in 2017. Back-to-back with this workshop, the results of the national legislation analysis were discussed during a roundtable event. Participants from several ministries and state-owned enterprises discussed recommendations on possible adjustments of the legislation to introduce Best Available Techniques and on further steps for ratification and implementation of the Convention's key protocols. Azerbaijan is now considering step-by-step accession to the key protocols in the near future starting with the EMEP Protocol.

As a result of the workshop on emission inventories, Azerbaijan submitted its emission data and Informative Inventory Report for the first time in the 2015 reporting round, which included information

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