

## Decision 2019/15

### Revised mandate for the International Cooperative Programme on Assessment and Monitoring of the Effects of Air Pollution on Rivers and Lakes

*The Executive Body,*

*Recalling* the relevant provisions of articles 7 and 8 of the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution,

*Recalling also* its decision 1999/2 concerning the structure and organization of work,

*Recalling further* the terms of reference for the International Cooperative Programme on Assessment and Monitoring of the Effects of Air Pollution on Rivers and Lakes (EB.AIR/WG.1/2000/4, annex III), noted at its eighteenth session (ECE/EB.AIR/71, para. 58 (c)),

*Recalling* its decision 2002/1 on the financing of core activities, as amended by decision 2018/8,

*Acknowledging* the achievements of the International Cooperative Programme on Assessment and Monitoring of the Effects of Air Pollution on Rivers and Lakes, including:

(a) Maintenance of a regionally extensive database on water chemistry and biology (aquatic macroinvertebrates) in areas in Europe and North America sensitive to air pollution;

(b) Developing and maintaining high data quality standards by developing and adhering to a manual of recommended methods, and undertaking an annual inter-calibration of chemical analyses and biological classifications;

(c) Documentation of widespread biological and chemical recovery of acid-sensitive waters as a response to reduced emissions of sulphur and nitrogen, through periodic trend assessments in water chemistry and biology, providing evidence that air pollution policy has its intended effect, but also highlighting that many sensitive surface waters remain acidified;

(d) Documentation of increased aquatic biodiversity as a result of reduced sulphur emissions;

(e) Documentation of mercury in fish in northern, boreal lakes, at levels that exceed limits advised for human consumption; for lakes that are impacted by air pollution there is so far little evidence that levels of mercury in fish are declining, implying that mercury pollution remains a concern;

(f) Providing evidence that climate change may present a delay for chemical and biological recovery of surface waters.

*Recognizing* the need to update the Programme's mandate to ensure its consistency with the provisions of the amended Protocols to the Convention, and its strategic priorities, as set out in the following documents:

(a) The revised long-term strategy for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (ECE/EB.AIR/142/Add.2);

(b) The 2016 scientific assessment of the Convention;<sup>1</sup>

(c) The policy response to the 2016 scientific assessment of the Convention (ECE/EB.AIR/WG.5/2017/3 and Corr.1 and ECE/EB.AIR/2017/4).

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<sup>1</sup> See Rob Maas and Peringe Grennfelt, eds., *Towards Cleaner Air: Scientific Assessment Report 2016* (Oslo, 2016) and United States Environmental Protection Agency and Environment and Climate Change Canada, *Towards Cleaner Air: Scientific Assessment Report 2016 – North America* (2016).

*Noting with appreciation* the hosting of the Programme Centre by the Norwegian Institute for Water Research and the ongoing leadership of the Programme Task Force by Norway,

1. *Adopts* the Programme's revised mandate as contained in the annex to the present decision, which includes the key objectives and functions of the Programme Task Force and the Programme Centre to be carried out on an ongoing basis, whereas additional activities and specific tasks and associated deliverables to be carried out in a shorter time frame will be included in the biennial workplans for the implementation of the Convention;

2. *Decides* that:

(a) The Programme Centre, in cooperation with the Chair of the Programme Task Force, is responsible for the detailed planning and coordination of the Programme;

(b) The lead country or countries are responsible for leading and coordinating the Task Force's ongoing work and tasks, organizing its meetings, communicating with participating experts and other organizational arrangements, in accordance with the biennial workplan. Chairs of the Task Force are appointed by the lead country or countries to carry out these tasks;

(c) In the event that a lead country needs to discontinue its leadership role, it is encouraged to notify the secretariat, Co-Chairs, and other lead countries as soon as possible, but preferably no later than one year prior to the time it will need to cease its leadership activities. The withdrawing lead country will make every effort to ensure a smooth transition to the next leadership model, by ensuring that all data and any other information required for Task Force operations are provided to the appropriate country or person(s);

(d) The Programme Centre is responsible for coordinating the relevant activities under the Programme, including development of technical projects, provision of deliverables according to the workplan (including annual reports and access to all relevant information and data), participation in the relevant Task Force meetings, organizing technical workshops and training workshops, communicating with national experts and providing direct support to Parties, maintaining an up-to-date web page that includes information on the Programme and other organizational arrangements in accordance with the biennial workplan;

(e) The Programme Centre is responsible for the production and provision of all information and data on air pollution impacts on surface waters necessary for the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols by the Parties;

(f) The Programme Centre and the Chair of the Task Force are responsible for carrying out the work assigned to them in the biennial workplans approved by the Executive Body, reporting thereon and keeping other relevant bodies apprised of their work.

## **Annex**

### **Revised mandate for the International Cooperative Programme on Assessment and Monitoring of the Effects of Air Pollution on Rivers and Lakes**

1. The International Cooperative Programme on Assessment and Monitoring of the Effects of Air Pollution on Rivers and Lakes will continue to assess, on a regional basis, the degree and geographical extent of the impact of atmospheric pollution on surface waters.

2. The Programme Centre and the Chair of the Task Force report on their activities and deliverables to the Working Group on Effects.

3. The functions of the Programme Centre and the Task Force are to:

(a) Plan and conduct the technical work to assess, using monitoring data and other sources of scientific evidence:

(i) The degree and geographic extent of the impact of atmospheric pollution, in particular acidification, on surface water chemistry and biology – including biodiversity, and assess temporal trends and spatial patterns;

(ii) Spatial patterns and temporal trends of heavy metals, most importantly mercury, in aquatic ecosystems, related to atmospheric pollution;

- (iii) The impact of persistent organic pollutants in aquatic ecosystems, related to atmospheric pollution;
- (iv) The impact of confounding factors relating to air pollution impacts on surface waters such as climate, climate change and land-use;
- (b) Contribute to:
  - (i) Assessing air pollution impacts on aquatic ecosystems through collating and reviewing scientific literature;
  - (ii) Updating the *Manual on Methodologies and Criteria for Modelling and Mapping Critical Loads and Levels and Air Pollution Effects, Risks and Trends*<sup>2</sup> and related background documents with the latest relevant scientific knowledge.
- (c) Promote international harmonization of monitoring practices by:
  - (i) Maintaining and updating a manual for methods and operation;
  - (ii) Conducting an annual chemical intercomparison and an annual biological inter-calibration;
  - (iii) Compiling a centralized database with data quality control and assessment capabilities.
- (d) Support the Parties with the further development and implementation of methodologies described under paragraph 3 (a) and (b) above, including requirements of the new European Union National Emissions Ceilings Directive;<sup>3</sup> organize the annual Task Force meeting and invite Parties to attend, present their work related to the Programme and contribute to discussions and new developments;
- (e) Support and encourage participation of countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia in Task Force meetings and activities;
- (f) Collaborate with: the International Cooperative Programme on Integrated Monitoring of Air Pollution Effects on Ecosystems on the organization of meetings, and on assessing air pollution impacts on surface waters; other bodies under the Convention (such as the International Cooperative Programme on Modelling and Mapping of Critical Levels and Loads and Air Pollution Effects, Risks and Trends, the Coordination Centre for Effects and the Meteorological Synthesizing Centre-West) on thematic reports defined in the workplan;
- (g) Collaborate with external partners, particularly the Minamata Convention on Mercury and the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Arctic Council, on issues of common interest;
- (h) Carry out other tasks assigned to them by Working Group on Effects and the Executive Body.

<sup>2</sup> Most recent version available at [http://icpmapping.org/Latest\\_update\\_Mapping\\_Manual](http://icpmapping.org/Latest_update_Mapping_Manual).

<sup>3</sup> Directive (EU) 2016/2284 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2016 on the reduction of national emissions of certain atmospheric pollutants, amending Directive 2003/35/EC and repealing Directive 2001/81/EC, *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 344 (2016), pp. 1–31.