

# Report of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Taskforce Meeting of the Forum for International Cooperation on Air Pollution

3<sup>rd</sup> Session  
Online, 4-5 November 2025  
[Summary](#)

## Introduction

The Forum for International Cooperation on Air Pollution (FICAP) was established following a decision of the 41<sup>st</sup> Executive Body meeting of the UNECE Convention on Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP). A mandate was issued to the United Kingdom and Sweden to set up a Task Force for International Cooperation on Air Pollution.

The Task Force promotes international collaboration towards preventing and reducing air pollution to improve air quality globally. FICAP is a forum for the international exchange of information and mutual learning on both the scientific/technical and policy levels. It is intended to be a repository for technical information and a convener of countries and organizations, with the goal of increasing international cooperation on addressing air pollution.

This report sets out the main discussion points and outputs of the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Taskforce, held online between 4-5 November 2025, and action towards the biannual work plan agreed by the Executive Body.

The meeting brought together international delegates across governments, IGOs, NGOs and Task Forces under the Air Convention, to participate in open discussion to shape the focus and direction of the Forum as it progresses.

The meeting was conducted virtually, with the co-chairs facilitating the meeting discussion.

## Attendance

The third meeting of the Task Force for The Forum for International Cooperation on Air Pollution (FICAP) was attended by over 40 participants, including representatives from Parties to the UNECE Air Convention, as well as Task force and ICP Chairs, and representatives from International Governmental Organisations (IGO), other International Organisations (IO), academia and research institutions, and relevant Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO).

The following Parties to the Air Convention were present: Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, the European Commission, Germany, Italy, Moldova, Monaco, Netherlands, Romania, Serbia, Sweden, Türkiye, and the United Kingdom.

In addition, the meeting was also attended by the following working groups and organisations:

- Secretariat to the UNECE Air Convention
- ICP Forests
- ICP vegetation
- TFEIP (Task Force on Emission Inventories and Projections)
- TFHTAP (Task Force on Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution)
- TFIAM (Task Force on Integrated Assessment Modelling)
- TFTEI (Task Force on Techno-Economic Issues)
- CCAC, (Climate and Clean Air Coalition)
- UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme)
- WHO, (World Health Organisation)
- WMO (World Meteorological Organization)
- AirQo
- Health Effects Institute
- Carnegie Mellon University
- University of Portsmouth,

The session was chaired and opened by the co-chairs of FICAP: John Salter (United Kingdom) and Stefan Åström (Sweden).

## Introductions and opening remarks

The opening of the meeting consisted of initial welcomes, introductions, and opening remarks given by the co-chairs, followed by two presentations which were delivered by UNECE Air Convention Secretariat and the FICAP co-chair. The presentation by UNECE secretariat provided an overview of the recent Gothenburg Protocol revision process, whilst the co-chair presented the latest updates from FICAP.

### Presentations

#### **UNECE Secretariat** – Recent updates and negotiations

Mrs. Alina Novikova from the UNECE Air Convention secretariat, delivered a presentation outlining the current activities under the framework of the Air Convention. Her presentation provided an overview of the ongoing process to revise the Gothenburg Protocol. Additionally, she shared updates on various areas of work conducted under the Convention, including policy development, reporting mechanisms, scientific data initiatives, and procedural matters.

#### **TFICAP** – Recent activities

FICAP co-chair Mr. Stefan Åström delivered a presentation covering recent updates from FICAP. He outlined the LRTAP objectives for 2024-2026, specifically highlighting the revision of the Gothenburg Protocol. Alongside this he presented the main FICAP objectives:

- increasing the cooperation between regions/countries,
- engaging with other regional organisations and IOs, and
- supporting international and global initiatives on air pollution management.

Stefan referred to FICAP cooperation activities including TFICAP joining the Africa Clean Air Forum and the Clean Air International Forum in 2025. Stefan further highlighted FICAP's collaboration with the CCAC and drew attention to the AQMx platform which holds curated guidance for Air Quality Management.

## Session 1: Development and Capacity Building by Parties of the UNECE Air Convention

The first session focused on specific capacity building activities undertaken by parties of the UNECE Air convention. The session was split into two segments; the first segment comprised of parties delivering presentations giving demonstrating their capacity building activities in different regions. The second segment was a shorter discussion-based segment which was focused on the discussion points provided to attendees in advance of the meeting, and upon observations of the presentations made by attendees. The notes of the discussion-based segment have been merged with the day 2 discussion for the purposes of this final report. The discussion notes are presented after the notes of the session 3 presentations.

### Presentations

#### **Germany – Advisory Assistance Programme**

The representatives from Germany's UBA, Mrs. Almut Reichart and Mr. Hendrik Freitag, delivered a comprehensive overview of Germany's ongoing assistance programmes with other countries as part of the Advisory Assistance Programme (AAP) run by the German Environment Agency (UBA), which primarily targets countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA), as well as Northern Africa. The AAP encompasses a large range of projects including in the fields of environmental technologies and air quality management.

The principles of the AAP are as follows: 1) Knowledge Exchange – facilitating the transfer of expertise and best practices. 2) Ownership – ensuring that projects are locally desired and actively supported. 3) Impact Orientation – focusing on measurable outcomes and meaningful improvements.

The presentation detailed Germany's sponsorship of the development of the Air Convention's e-learning courses. Germany also develops technical documentation that defines Best Available Techniques (BAT) and Best Reference Technology (BREF) for reducing air pollution.

Germany presented their work with Indian governmental bodies (including state/regional bodies) to apply BAT in selected industrial sectors. Germany shared insights into the European process for BAT development, which is characterized by a model of participatory governance. This cooperation has successfully produced an Indian BREF/COIND document for the textile sector, currently in its final stages. The textile BREF for Gujarat has already been launched and officially adopted.

Additionally, Germany participates in the OECD Expert Group on BAT, which convenes twice annually—once in person and once virtually.

#### **European commission – Presentation on outreach projects**

Mrs. Panagiota Dilara presented an overview of the European Commission's current outreach activities, which fall into two main categories: 1) Support to UN bodies UNECE and UNEP through EU grants and projects and 2) Direct country support through mechanisms such as TAIX (Technical Assistance and Information Exchange) and twinning programs.

The EU Commission provides grants to the UNECE secretariat in various forms, including institutional support, and also funds direct project work through UNEP and the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC), with examples including initiatives in Sub-Saharan African countries such as Kenya.

Twinning, a long-standing programme active since 1988, focuses on collaboration with partner countries aligned with the EU's international partnership and development policy.

TAIX, meanwhile, facilitates short-term technical assistance and knowledge exchange between EU Member States and neighbouring countries, with an expanding scope that now includes



global partners and Northern African countries. A recent example of TAIEX activity is a workshop on emission inventories, conducted as a co-learning initiative with Western Balkan countries, highlighting the programme's emphasis on collaborative technical exchange.

### **United Kingdom – Presentation by FCDO, recent funding announcements, IGP**

Mr. David Foster, Air Quality Advisor at the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), presented the current cooperation priorities of the United Kingdom in the field of air quality. The UK's primary focus lies in supporting countries across the African continent, South Asia, and South-East Asia. An example David gave of a key area of engagement for the UK FCDO is the support provided to ICIMOD (the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development) and countries within the Indo-Gangetic Plain and Himalayan Foothills (IGP-HF) region. The UK has been a major contributor to World Bank-led (WB) project activities in this region and is also a significant funder of ICIMOD's initiatives.

Further efforts presented by David included the UK involvement in building a case for action with the African Clean Air Programme, which aims to strengthen regional action on air quality. In addition, the UK is investing in evidence-building to support policy development. A notable example is the funding provided to the South African Medical Research Council to conduct research on the health impacts of coal-fired power plants in South Africa.

### **Türkiye – capacity building activities**

Mrs. Canan Esin Köksal presented Türkiye's ongoing capacity-building activities in the field of air quality management. Türkiye currently operates across four key divisions: the Modelling and Mapping Division, the Sustainability Strategy and Zero Pollution Division, the Transportation and Mobility Division, and the Emission Management Policy Division. Türkiye began reporting emission inventories to the UNECE Air Convention in 2012 and continues to engage actively with other international bodies, including UNESCAP, UNEP, and WHO.

At the national level, Türkiye has advanced air pollution concentration modelling in collaboration with CHIMERE model experts. Additionally, digital tools for air quality management and forecasting are available through the HEY web portal.

A recent capacity-building initiative was conducted jointly with Pakistan and North Macedonia on 4 September 2025 where Air Quality Management Topics were raised and digital tools introduced.

Türkiye has identified several priority areas for future collaboration: 1) Maintaining active participation in UNEA and other UN-related international meetings 2) Contributing to the EMEP Steering Body through the Vice Chair role held by Mrs. Irde Cetinturk Gurtepe 3) Ensuring expert involvement in relevant Task Forces and Working Groups and 4) Continuing to strengthen the emission inventory process.

## **Session 2: UNECE Air Convention cooperation with International and Global Initiatives**

The second session focused on UNECE Air Convention cooperation efforts made by existing Task Forces, and cooperation made by international initiatives. Consistent with the approach taken in session 2, the third session was also split into two segments; the first segment comprised of presentations delivered by IGOs, NGOs and Air Quality Taskforces detailing their international collaboration across regions. The second segment was again a shorter discussion-based segment



which was focused on the discussion points provided to attendees in advance of the meeting, and upon observations of the presentations made by attendees. The notes of the discussion-based segment have been merged with the day 1 discussion for the purposes of this final report. The discussion notes are presented after the notes of the session 3 presentations.

## Presentations

### **UNECE presentation on overview of capacity building and outreach**

The UNECE Air Convention secretariat representative Mrs. Carolin Sanz Noriega delivered a presentation outlining current capacity-building and outreach activities under the Air Convention, as well as plans for further into 2025/26. The secretariat highlighted the National Clean Air Dialogue that took place in Armenia in 2025, as well as ongoing funded work on BATs in EECCA and WB countries supported through funding contributions.

The presentation noted the availability of e-learning courses covering emission inventories, environmental effects, and the Convention and its protocols. These resources can be promoted by FICAP as part of their activities. Post presentation discussions explored potential synergies with existing initiatives, including the AQMX platform, which is already linked to Convention efforts. In addition, there was a discussion of interest in convening a Global Dialogue on Clean Air, potentially aligned with Clean Air Day next year. This event could serve as a collaborative platform involving CCAC, UNEP, FICAP and could be a good exchange to regional UN groups to help facilitate ratification.

It was further suggested in discussions arising from the presentation that conversations with Carolin should be held after the event to discuss further a Global Clean Air dialogue for the next Clean Air Day in 2026.

### **UNEP and CCAC joint presentation – UNECE contribution to AQMx,**

The UNEP part of the presentation was delivered by Mrs. Soraya Smaoun and began with a review of UNEA resolutions on air pollution, including 1/7 (2014), 3/8 (2018), 74/212 (2019), 76/300 (2022), and 6/10 (2024), underscoring the sustained international commitment to addressing air quality challenges.

It was confirmed that air quality remains a core component of UNEP's strategic framework, which is structured around four pillars (Shifting Investments, Strengthening Policy and Regulations, Developing and Communicating Science, Amplifying Advocacy and Networks). These pillars are closely linked to other initiatives, such as CCAC's AQMx platform and the Montevideo Programme on Environmental Law. It was highlighted that to date, 70 countries have nominated focal points for the Global Air Quality Cooperation Network, reflecting growing international engagement. Regional updates included progress from ESCAP and the RAPAP initiative, particularly in implementation efforts.

The CCAC side of the presentation was presented by Mrs. Juliette Laurent and Mrs. Amanda Curry Brown. Their presentation focussed largely on the AQMx platform. Initially the presenters provided updates on CCAC financial and strategic planning. CCAC is currently exploring new financial mechanisms and funding sources to support future activities. As CCAC's Clean Air Flagship programme enters its final year, discussions are underway to define next steps, with a shift toward action-oriented goals that are achievable in the near term. AQMx continues to expand, with curated guidance available for stages one, two and three of the eight identified areas of air quality management. Guidance for stages four and five is scheduled for launch in 2026, aligned with Clean Air Day, and linked to broader UNECE engagement.

UNECE reported that 75 resources—including reports, guidance documents, and online training materials—have been made available to AQMx through the Air Convention library. Out of these, sectoral mitigation guidance has been developed for four priority sectors. Future Air Convention and CCAC cooperation will focus on uploading new knowledge products to AQMx, including materials related to fossil fuel mitigation in collaboration with TFTEI, and enhancing regional cooperation through the development of regional knowledge hubs.

Three key areas of collaboration between UNECE and CCAC were identified:

1. UNECE will support CCAC in establishing connections with relevant bodies under the Air Convention to assist in the development of targeted guidance.
2. Both organizations will work together to create a blueprint outlining the essential building blocks for successful cooperation on air pollution—recognizing that while approaches must be tailored to regional contexts, shared frameworks can offer valuable guidance.
3. The existing integration of UNECE resources into AQMx was acknowledged and celebrated, with a call to action for Task Forces and International Cooperative Programmes (TFs/ICPs) to update their contributions to ensure the platform remains current and comprehensive.

#### **WHO presentation – updates on WHO latest work**

The World Health Organization (WHO) represented by Mrs. Sophie Gumy provided an update on its latest work related to air quality and health. A key development is the introduction of a new voluntary international target aimed at achieving a 50% improvement in the health sector’s response to air pollution. This target is focused exclusively on health outcomes and is intended to support the tracking of progress towards improved air quality.

The presentation addressed the alignment of national air quality standards with WHO guidelines, noting that alignment is generally stronger in countries of the global north compared to those in the global south. WHO continues to advance its evidence base through systematic reviews, including recent work on black carbon (BC) and its health impacts.

In relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), WHO is actively engaged in refining indicators linked to Goals 3 (health), 7 (energy), and 11 (cities). A country consultation process is currently underway, in collaboration with UNEP and WMO, to strengthen the connection between the 187 existing SDG indicators and air quality-related work. The potential for developing improved indicators in the future was also discussed, with a formal launch of updated guidance anticipated in January or February.

Finally, WHO highlighted its ongoing efforts to produce concise health science and policy summaries—referred to as “snapshots”—which aim to distil key findings and recommendations for policymakers and practitioners.

#### **AirQo presentation – recent activity**

Mr. Deo Okure from AirQo presented recent developments in AirQo’s air quality management work. The presentation highlighted a range of strategies implemented across the continent, including interventions in household cooking, energy systems, and green mobility. These efforts primarily rely on technological solutions and are supported by legislation that delivers co-benefits across air quality, tobacco control, and climate action.



Continuous air quality monitoring is expanding through the deployment of portable sensors and the use of open-source data platforms, offering alternative technological approaches to traditional systems. Reference-grade monitors are also being used to build community engagement and enhance data reliability. Despite these efforts, many African countries have no access to continuous monitoring, although non-government-run networks are increasing data access. Deo noted that many of the challenges faced in Africa are shared across the continent and with other regions, reinforcing the need for collaborative solutions. While resource needs remain, the requirements for holistic interventions are not well understood and documented. The emphasis now should be on adopting new approaches and scaling up evidence-driven interventions and coordination efforts.

### **Africa Clean Air Network - updates**

Mr. Deo Okure provided recent updates on the Africa Clean Air Network (AfriCAN). The network unites partners across borders, discipline and sectors towards evidence-driven clean air actions in Africa; it now includes 57 partners, among them FICAP. Strategic priorities for AfriCAN are as follows: 1) Enabling cross-border knowledge exchange and collaboration, 2) Strengthening the open-air quality data systems, 3) Strengthening science policy pathways.

Ongoing activities include the development of a special issue publication to showcase regional progress, as well as facilitation of partner led events to spotlight new data, tools, and resources. Looking ahead, the annual CLEAN Air Forum is scheduled to take place in South Africa in 2026. This event is expected to be particularly valuable following the country's G20 presidency and will serve as a platform to strengthen South-South cooperation on air quality management.

## Discussion

### Discussion day 1 - Theme: Development and Capacity Building by Parties of the UNECE Air Convention

The discussion points presented on the slides to the attendees, which were also provided to the attendees in advance of the meeting, were as follows:

- Discuss best practices and how to coordinate efforts by Parties in different regions
- Discuss what gaps exist and whether Parties to the Convention could help fill these.

Representatives noted that several Parties to the Convention are active in the same countries outside of the UNECE region, especially focusing on South Asia. It was discussed how like-minded countries could coordinate better and keep each other informed of capacity-strengthening being undertaken in specific countries. It was noted that this is possibly more likely between Country missions and embassies, however it was questioned whether that information gets back to decision makers in capitals to direct finite resources effectively.

Representatives also discussed how to best prioritize projects. It was noted that long-term commitment is needed, some parties have had projects operate for more than 10 years in specific jurisdictions before knowing for sure that the project had intended effect. Also, it was noted that synergies often are found in air quality projects by approaching sub-national as well as national governments, taking into account the size of populations in some sub-national jurisdictions. Further, technical capacity cooperation needs to go hand-in-hand with operational and administrative capacity cooperation. To focus solely on scientific/technical capacity strengthening neglects how to integrate new thinking into policy and enforcement decisions.



Discussion moved to how Parties, International organisations, and NGOs can help coordinate amongst each other in terms of what activities of capacity strengthening are happening in different regions. It was requested that the FICAP Co-Chairs consider how this can be done by Parties to the Air Convention as well as the Subsidiary bodies (i.e. Task Forces, ICPs, Secretariat, etc). It was pointed out that in some countries, local UN offices are good at coordinating capacity strengthening within host countries. It was also noted that some NGOs, such as the Clean Air Fund, keep a good compendium of air quality related projects happening around the world in order to understand the level of finance and assistance being focused on reducing air pollution, and also coordinate a donor working group. This could also provide a source of intelligence on what is happening where and allow parties to coordinate their efforts more effectively.

In terms of best practises and gaps with capacity building, it was noted by representatives that there is demand from some regions (especially across Africa) to investigate cooperation on air quality monitoring. However, it was also recognized that it is not necessarily only cooperation on technical capacity (i.e. laboratories etc) that is needed. Rather, strengthening of staff capacities and long-term retention of staff was recognized as equally important. Further, some parties suggested that projects should consider the longevity of the processes being setup and whether these can be sustained beyond the timeline and financial resources of specific projects. Again, there was emphasis on the need for long-term commitment and strengthening to promote self-sustaining solutions and teams in the long run. The experience of some participants was that it took two or three years for a project with a “participatory approach” to be appropriately converted into local settings including the host nation identifying the approach suitable to the local conditions. However, political challenges to long-term commitments were acknowledged (i.e. governments may wish for quicker results).

Discussion then moved to creating local/host buy-in to cooperation projects. It was well noted that even if many projects have similarities and complementarities, a one-size-fits-all project approach is usually not effective. Local communities and end users should be involved as early as possible in projects, preferably already in the proposal phase. This engagement would increase the probability that decisions have a high chance of success and buy in from end users. It was also highlighted that parties to the Convention should avoid a simple north-south basis for relationships and should make sure that projects have two-way access to project ownership.

#### Discussion day 2 – Theme: UNECE Air Convention cooperation with International and Global Initiatives

The discussion points presented on the slides to the attendees, which were also provided to the attendees in advance of the meeting, were as follows:

- Discuss how the UNECE Air Convention Parties can further contribute to and cooperate with the initiatives presented.
- Discuss what topics of information, tools, guidance, and techniques are relevant to regions to tackle air pollution as the ‘building blocks’ for air quality improvements.

Participants noted the importance of considering ozone implications within the context of the Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution (TFHTAP & MSC-West) initiative. It was discussed that there was valuable knowledge generated through crop production studies, such as those under ICP Vegetation, which could be useful for other regions.



The discussion turned to the AQMx platform, with questions raised about how best practices can be added and shared. Participants discussed the logistical aspects of content submission, including access limitations and visibility across regions. It was clarified that currently, submissions are reviewed through the CCAC inbox, whilst final decisions on publication/addition to the AQMx database rests with CCAC. There was a discussion regarding potentially streamlining this process to ensure efficiency and inclusivity.

In addition to contributing to AQMx, participants reflected on the potential to draw from contributions from other non-UNECE regions as a useful input to the Gothenburg Protocol revision process. There was also recognition that it is important to make sure that the UNECE guidance materials are adaptable to varying levels of economic development and technological capacity across the Convention's regions.

There was strong support for the idea of bundling existing resources—such as WHO's Science and Policy Summaries (SPS), AQMx content, and UNECE training materials—into targeted packages for specific interventions, such as air quality monitoring. Participants agreed that a wealth of valuable content already exists and could be more effectively leveraged.

Concerns were raised regarding the implementation of a UNEP resolution to establish a global air quality cooperation network. While the resolution was welcomed, it was noted that no new resources had been allocated, and the first meeting in Colombia had to proceed with limited funding. There was consensus on the need to avoid duplication and to work collaboratively with relevant organizations in the air quality landscape to define the network's purpose and added value.

Language accessibility was identified by participants as a key consideration, with participants emphasizing the importance of translating materials to ensure broader reach. While technical guidance is often readily available, challenges remain in translating this into practical implementation. Participants stressed the need to incorporate hands-on expertise and collective experience to bridge this gap.

The importance of a robust science-to-policy framework was underscored, along with the value of institutional memory. Participants suggested building on existing forums and drawing lessons from regional experiences, such as those in the Indo-Gangetic Plain.

Finally, the participants noted that other global forums are increasingly focusing on air quality management. Participants encouraged all Parties to actively engage in these inter-regional programmes and communication channels to foster greater alignment and collaboration.

## Report Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Given several examples of Parties to the Convention operating in similar jurisdictions around the world, it is recommended that more effort is made to coordinate efforts amongst Parties. ACTION: TFICAP Co-Chairs to explore avenues with IGOs/NGOs to map and collate existing capacity strengthening activities in different regions by Parties to the Convention and/or Taskforces.

2. Best practices that could be utilised by Parties to the Convention when initiating new projects in other regions include:
  - i. Checking what projects on subject have been conducted in the past and by which organisation/country to understand the history of activities and current capabilities,
  - ii. Checking that work is being carried out by long-term sustainable staff or organisations. I.e. that there is a self-propelling function that will continue after project completes,
  - iii. Project initiates with end users at the point of decision around direction/funding, to avoid path dependence/sunk cost fallacy issues. This makes it more likely that a project will be continued beyond its initial funding.
3. There was some agreement that the texts agreed at high level forums do provide hooks for greater action to tackle air pollution across different regions (such as the 50% health target of the WHO conference). Further it was recognised that climate action does elevate air pollution action as well, and there are often win-win scenarios, albeit with some risk of trade-offs. Therefore, the necessity of an integrated air & climate approach is important to convey by the Task Force and Parties to the Convention. It should remain central in the negotiations on the Gothenburg Protocol, as well as during inputs to other Forums.
4. Parties should be mindful to not operate with a global north mentality and remember that cooperation is not just a north-to-south one-directional intervention. The new financial landscape of capacity strengthening funding also suggests that increasingly funding will need to come from 'all sources' to be effective. Parties may wish to further coordinate with IGOs, NGOs, and existing UN processes to make effective contributions to capacity strengthening.
5. The Chairs suggest that the UNECE Air Convention look to support the convening of a Global Dialogue on Clean Air, potentially aligned with Clean Air Day in 2026. This event could serve as a collaborative platform for all regions and facilitate exchanges of relevant information on reducing air pollution, involving CCAC, UNEP, UNECE/FICAP and other regional UN groups and interested countries.
6. Recognition and thanks were expressed to the EU Commission for activities of the TAIEX programme to assist capacity strengthening amongst Parties to the Convention on air quality management.