

Integrating air quality and climate change mitigation – Is there a need for new metrics to support decision making?

Copenhagen, October 9 and 10, 2013

at the European Environment Agency, Kongens Nytorv 6, 1050 Copenhagen, Denmark

Workshop motivation

Air pollution and climate change are often treated at national and international level as separate problems under different regulatory or thematic frameworks and different policy departments. With air pollution and climate change being strongly linked with regard to their causes, effects and mitigation options, the integration of policies that steer air pollutant and greenhouse gas emission reductions might result in cheaper, more effective and thus more sustainable tackling of the two problems.

The conference “Air Quality and Climate Change Policies – Separate or Joint Challenges” held on May 21 in Brussels showed that the utility of integration is widely accepted among the various stakeholder groups in the European Union, from scientists to policy-makers, but that the degree of integration between the air quality and climate change policy areas needs to be carefully evaluated in order to prevent delays in action at the thematic level (<http://climpol.iass-potsdam.de/news/air-quality-and-climate-change-policies-separate-or-joint-challenges>). A conclusion from the conference was that a first no regret and immediately applicable step is to evaluate consequences for air quality when implementing climate change mitigation options and vice-versa and to make use of co-benefits and to avoid trade-offs.

With this workshop we would like to address the issue of identifying, quantifying and communicating present-day and potential future co-benefits and trade-offs to support informed decision making and to work towards an integrated air quality and climate change mitigation policy. An important part of these conversations will be the discussion on what “integration” means in practice and what type of information in the form of metrics can best support this. We are aware that there has been and are significant, on-going efforts in this area, especially in the context of climate change, including previous workshops, such as the IPCC Expert Meeting on the Science of Alternative Metrics and others. We hope to be able to build on this previous work, and yet also add a more explicit discussion of air quality and climate interactions, co-benefits and trade-offs, and the role of air pollutants as climate forcers and what this means for established metrics.

The identification of co-benefits and trade-offs requires the application of appropriate metrics that are well rooted in science, easy to understand and reflect the needs of policy, industry and the public for informed decision making. For the purpose of this workshop, metrics are loosely defined as a quantified measure of effect or impact used to inform decision-making and to evaluate mitigation measures.

The aim of the workshop is therefore to discuss whether current available metrics are “fit for purpose” or whether there is a need to develop alternative metrics or reassess the way current metrics are used and communicated. To that extent the workshop will be organized around the following themes:

- Discuss the informational needs and current application of the end-users of metrics, who, depending on their field and area of operation (EU, national, city, facility level) might require health, policy, and/or economically relevant parameters at different scales.
- Provide an overview of the state of the science of currently used and newly developed metrics, and the scientific validity of these metrics.
- Identification of gaps in the current information base, whether from the scientific development of metrics or their application by different users; providing recommendations if and what new metrics might be needed to support and inform integrated air quality and climate change mitigation policies.

In order to discuss this from a variety of perspectives, we plan to invite representatives from science, policy, NGOs, and industry. We think that the best discussions can be held by a relatively small but experienced group of participants and therefore we aim to limit the workshop to 30 participants.

Draft agenda

Wednesday October 9

Welcome and registration

Morning programme (09:00-10:00)

- Welcome, overview of workshop aims, background, logistics, etc.
- Introductory talk I: "What are metrics, what do we need them for and who is using them?"
- Introductory talk II: "Metrics and integrated policy making, a balancing act between co-benefits and trade-offs versus effective tools for policy making"

Coffee break

- Session 1*: information needs and current application of the end-users of metrics: perspectives from a variety of end-users

Lunch (EEA canteen)

- Session 2*: overview of the state of the science of currently used and newly developed/revised metrics

Drinks/social event

Thursday October 10

Morning:

- Session 3*: Identification of gaps in the current information base and recommendations if and what new metrics to support decision making might be needed

Lunch

- Session 4: Discussion on lessons learned from session 1-3 and towards 5 recommendations as workshop conclusion.

Close (1600-1700)

*The format of these sessions (e.g., plenary, break-out groups, presentations, discussion, etc.) will be determined after receiving feedback from participants.