

PART III. National reporting for CSD-14/15 Thematic areas

PART III. Norway A. Atmosphere/Air pollution

Government focal point(s): Ministry of the Environment
Responding ministry/office(s): Ministry of the Environment

Policies and legislation

Norwegian policy development for atmosphere/air pollution is closely linked to the development of relevant international agreements, notably

- The Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution/LRTAP (1979)
- The Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer (1985)
- The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (2001)

Norway is part of the European Economic Area and implements relevant EU legislation.

Norway's response to the 2004 LRTAP Questionnaire on Air Pollution Abatement (although tailored to the specific reporting requirements of the LRTAP protocols) gives an overview of the policies that are in place to control air pollution (Attachment I).

We would particularly like to highlight the longstanding regional co-operation within LRTAP to combat acid rain, which is an issue of importance to Norway. For general information on the Convention and its eight protocols go to its website (www.unece.org/env/lrtap).

Pollution caused by emissions of sulphur oxides (SO_x), nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and ammonia (NH₃) is one of the greatest threats to biological diversity in Norway, particularly in fresh water. The most tangible effect is damage to fish stocks, particularly in southern Norway. The combination of volatile organic compounds (VOC) and NO_x leads to the formation of ground-level ozone, high concentrations of which cause damage to health, vegetation, crops and materials. The presence of excessive amounts of NO_x and ammonia can lead to eutrophication.

Emissions from other European countries and international shipping are the main sources of sulphur and nitrogen deposition in Norway at levels exceeding the critical loads for acidification. The environmental problems caused by long-range transboundary pollution can thus only be solved effectively through binding international co-operation. Norway has taken on ambitious international commitments to reduce emissions. The most difficult task is to reduce Norway's annual NO_x emissions by around 30 per cent by 2010, in accordance with the Gothenburg

Protocol. Norway will have to make significant cuts in emissions, especially from shipping, fishing and land-based industries and from power generation on offshore installations.

Co-operation

As a party to the Montreal Protocol, Norway has committed itself to phasing out the use of ozone-depleting substances. In addition, Norway contributes to the Protocol's Multilateral Fund, thus assisting developing countries to meet phase-out requirements for chemicals covered by the Montreal Protocol, possibly at a rate faster than they have committed themselves to. Norway is allocating NOK 9 million to the Ozone Fund in 2005.

Protection of the ozone layer is one of the six main areas of financing through GEF. Hence, Norway's allocations to GEF (NOK 57 million in 2005) also contribute to GEF's efforts to protect the ozone layer.

Projects relating to air pollution are a central part of Norway's bilateral environmental co-operation with several countries. This demonstrates Norway's interest in reducing emissions of air pollutants in Europe and other parts of the world in order to protect ecosystems from damage. Many of the current projects make use of the expertise that Norwegian institutions have built up through their involvement in research, monitoring and assessment in Europe. Countries in which projects relating to air pollution are currently being carried out include Russia, several former Soviet republics, new EU member states, China and South Africa.

Through the two new financial mechanisms established under the European Economic Area (EEA) Enlargement Agreement, Norway is contributing EUR 226.8 million a year to the reduction of social and economic disparities in the enlarged EEA.

The beneficiary states have given priority to a wide range of sectors including the environment, promotion of sustainable development, conservation of the European cultural heritage, human resource development, health and childcare, education, research and implementation of Schengen acquis. Their priorities vary to some extent, but all 13 beneficiary states have included protection of the environment and promotion of sustainable development as priority sectors.

In the environmental sector, most of the beneficiary states have chosen to give priority to the reduction of air and water pollution and the promotion of renewable energy sources. The EEA financial mechanisms will soon become operational, and Norway expects that a broad portfolio of projects and programmes will be established, which will contribute substantially to protection of the environment and promotion of sustainable development in the beneficiary states. The EEA financial mechanisms are also expected to make a positive contribution to bilateral co-operation and the exchange of knowledge in various areas, including the environmental sector.