

Air Pollution Series

Actions on Air Quality

A Global Summary of Policies and
Programmes to Reduce Air Pollution

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programmes to
reduce **air pollution**

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

AAP	ambient air pollution
AAQS	ambient air quality standards
ALRI	acute lower respiratory infection
AQM	air quality management
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CA	conservation agriculture
CCAC	Climate & Clean Air Coalition
CLRTAP	Convention on Long-range Trans-boundary Air Pollution
CO₂	carbon dioxide
COPD	chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
DIMAQ	Data Integration Model for Air Quality
DPFs	diesel particulate filters
EECCA	Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia
ESMAP	Energy Sector Management Assistance Program (of the World Bank Group)
GBD	the Global Burden of Disease project
GDP	gross domestic product
GHG	greenhouse gas

HAP	household air pollution
IHME	Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation
LMICs	low- and middle-income countries
LPG	liquefied petroleum gas
MECS	modern energy cooking services
MMT	million metric tons
NDC	nationally determined contribution
NOX	nitrogen oxides
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PM_{2.5}	fine particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of less than 2.5 microns
PM₁₀	fine particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of less than 10 microns
PPP	purchasing power parity
SLCP	short-lived climate pollutant
SO₂	sulphur dioxide
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization
UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

Executive summary

Context

In 2019, 92 per cent of the world's population experienced PM_{2.5} concentrations in excess of the World Health Organization (WHO) guideline of 10 µg/m³ (**chapter 1A**). Without policy interventions, exposure to PM_{2.5} would increase by 50 per cent by 2030 (**chapter 1A**), severely compromising quality of life and risking lives worldwide.

This report reviews countries' policy actions with regards to the mandate provided by United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) resolution 3/8 on Preventing and reducing air pollution to improve air quality globally (**chapter 1C**). It builds on the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) 2016 report titled Actions on Air Quality (**chapter 1C**), which provided an overview of actions undertaken by countries around the world, focusing on a set of measures that – if adopted – would significantly improve air quality.

This new report is based on data collected in 2020 through a detailed survey shared with countries, which was supplemented with relevant literature documenting key actions being undertaken by governments around the world to improve air quality. The report is complemented by regional reports documenting more in-depth actions in key sectors, as well as regional trends and priorities.

In its aforementioned 2016 report, UNEP found that countries had adopted a substantial number of policies, standards and regulations to reduce air pollution. However, the report also revealed cross-cutting challenges to addressing air pollution. These included: ineffective implementation and enforcement of existing policies and regulations; limited cooperation between national and city administration; the universal need for monitoring and assessment; and the importance of behavioural change and public participation through awareness-raising and stakeholder involvement.

Status and trends

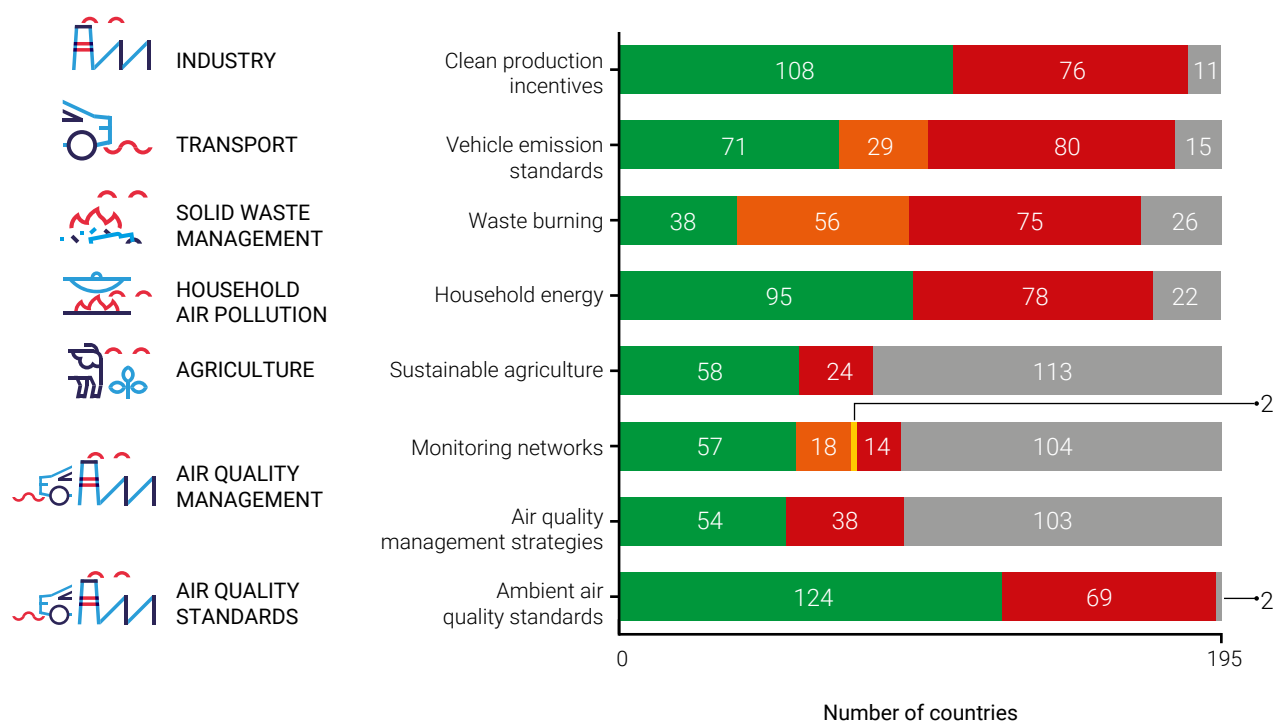
This 2021 report assesses actions in key sectors that contribute to air pollution, focusing on industrial emissions, transportation, solid waste management, household air pollution and agriculture emissions. It also provides an overview of non-sectoral air quality management actions, including air quality frameworks, strategies, standards and monitoring.

Overall, there is progress towards adoption of key actions that can significantly improve air quality

Figure ES.1 shows the progress towards adoption of key actions that can significantly improve air quality.

Figure ES.1 Progress towards adoption of key actions that can significantly improve air quality¹

Where is the world in taking action to improve air quality?



Source: UNEP survey data

Sectoral Measures

More countries have incentives or policies promoting cleaner production, energy efficiency and pollution abatement for



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