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HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON TRANSPORT,
ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Steering Committee on the Transport, Health and
Environment Pan-European Programme

Fifth session

Geneva, 16–17 April 2007

Item 5 (a) (iii) of the provisional agenda

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME

Progress reports and proposals for further action

**Transport-related health impacts and their costs and benefits, with a particular focus on
children – Toolbox on Transport, Environment and Health**

Note by the secretariat¹

1. This document reviews progress in the implementation of follow-up actions, as agreed by the Steering Committee on the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) at its fourth session (11–12 April 2006 – see document ECE/AC.21/2006/10 – EUR/06/THEPEPST/10) and outlines steps for implementing the Toolbox project. It has been

¹ This document has been submitted on the above date for technical reasons.

prepared in consultation with the co-chairs of the task force implementing the Toolbox and with the Georgian co-organizers of the Workshop on Sustainable Urban Transport and Land Use Planning.

2. At its fifth session, the Committee is invited to provide views regarding progress achieved and possible future directions of work. In particular, the Committee may wish to provide its views on the proposed contents of the Toolbox. Delegations are invited to consider possibilities for contributing to the proposals for how to proceed with the implementation of the project, including through active participation in the task force and provision of contents to the Toolbox.

I. BACKGROUND

3. The aim of the Toolbox is to maximize the positive health, environmental and societal effects of transport and to reduce the negative effects. Specific objectives are:

(a) To raise awareness of the links between transport, environment and health and to help identify obstacles to linking transport to environment and health policy;

(b) To demonstrate that negative impacts can be reduced and positive effects enhanced by changing policies and their implementation;

(c) To raise awareness of the possible side effects of specific policies;

(d) To present examples of recent practice and stimulate the development of case studies (e.g. of national or subnational assessments used to generate evidence for action, or on evaluation of interventions) across the WHO/Europe–UNECE region through international consultation; and

(e) To bring together, under a coherent and user-friendly framework, the results of relevant initiatives undertaken in the region.

4. The contents of the Toolbox will be tailored to meet the information needs of three main target audiences. These audiences, in order of priority, are:

(a) ***Senior politicians and decision makers on transport, environment and health***, including ministers responsible for transport, environment or health policy; senior civil servants who influence policies on transport, environment or health; and appointed authorities in the fields of transport, environment and health.

(b) ***Policymakers on transport, environment and health***, including local government officials in municipalities and at subnational levels of administration (regions, counties, and – in countries with federal systems – states).

(c) ***Practitioners and experts in transport, environment and health***, including transport, health and environment professionals involved in assessing the impacts of projects, plans and policies. These include town and transport planners; public health professionals; environmental consultancies; NGOs; consultants; and others conducting impact assessments.

II. DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOOLBOX

5. The Toolbox is developed by a task force of Member States, in line with decisions taken by the Steering Committee at its second session (ECE/AC.21/2004/14 – EUR/5045236/14). The task force consists of 12 WHO/Europe–UNECE Member States (Albania, Austria, the Czech Republic, France, Georgia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the Russian Federation, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the United Kingdom) and one NGO (International Society of Doctors for the Environment). It is co-chaired by Austria and the Netherlands, which also supports the coordination of the task force activities through the Dutch National Institute for Health and the Environment (RIVM).

6. As its main tool for exchanging information and documents, the task force uses a Web-based communication platform (VIADSK) set up in May 2006.

7. The task force held its fourth meeting on 20 October 2006 in Tbilisi, back to back with THE PEP Workshop on Sustainable Urban Transport and Land Use Planning, whose third day was dedicated to the discussion and testing of the Toolbox (see part III of this document). This allowed optimal use of resources, maximum input through international collaboration and synergies with other ongoing projects of THE PEP, in line with recommendations made by the Steering Committee at its fourth session. In addition, two telephone conferences were held (in July and November 2006) to discuss draft documents and other tools, experiences from the first testing of those tools, and next steps in project implementation.

8. The final workplan of the task force was endorsed by its members in June 2006. It describes the milestones and responsible parties for the next steps (see the summary in the annex to this document).

9. The Toolbox will be integrated into THE PEP Clearing House. It will provide an introduction to its scope and purpose; evidence briefings on key issues related to transport, environment and health; case studies of national or subnational assessments used to generate evidence for action, or on evaluation of interventions; and technical guidance, methods and tools, particularly for health impact assessment and cost-benefit analysis (ECE/AC.21/2006/5 – EUR/06/THEPEPST/5).

10. The evidence briefings will cover a number of key issues, to be developed by lead countries and institutions, as follows:

- (a) Transport-related noise exposure and health effects (Netherlands)
- (b) Transport-related air pollution and health effects (France)
- (c) Road traffic injuries (WHO/Europe)
- (d) Social inequalities (consultant, to be identified)
- (e) Transport-related physical activity (Austria)
- (f) Transport systems and climate change (WHO/Europe)

- (g) Groups at risk (consultant, to be identified)

11. To date the following case studies have been identified for inclusion in the Toolbox (the preparing countries/institutions are shown in parentheses):

- (a) Health impact of air pollution (France)
- (b) Effects of a speed limit reduction (Netherlands)
- (c) Effects of activities undertaken to internalize external transport costs (Switzerland)
- (d) Experiences with inter-ministerial cooperation (Lithuania)
- (e) Economic benefits of cycling and walking (Austria)
- (f) Health impacts of traffic measures (congestion charges) in London (United Kingdom)

12. Templates for the compilation of evidence briefings and case studies have been developed.

13. The technical implementation of the Toolbox and its integration into THE PEP Clearing House will be handled by a consultant.

III. TESTING OF THE TOOLBOX

14. Activities have been undertaken to test the Toolbox contents with its target audiences. In particular, a draft checklist for health impact assessment was tested in Tbilisi on the occasion of a subregional workshop held there in October 2006.

A. Testing of a draft checklist for health impact assessment

15. In summer 2006, the task force and other experts developed a draft checklist for health impact assessment (HIA). A consultant tested the draft checklist during a one-week mission in Tbilisi on 16–22 September 2006. The mission was supported by the Netherlands and WHO. Its goals were to:

- (a) Apply the draft checklist to a real-life case study involving the target audience and focusing on issues such as availability of data, data quality, communication flows, and coordination and cooperation between involved sectors and agencies;
- (b) Gain further understanding of the relevance of HIA to this subregion and identify the most relevant transport and environment-related exposures and health outcomes;
- (c) Gain an understanding of the perception and acceptance of an internationally developed tool in a country of EECCA;² and

² Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia.

(d) Support the finalization of the checklist to increase the relevance and usefulness of the tool, with a particular focus on the needs and circumstances in countries of EECCA and SEE.³

16. The mission included meetings with experts from the following Georgian agencies and institutions: Centre for Monitoring and Prognostication; Ministry of Environment Protection and Natural Resources; Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs; Centre for Disease Control and Medical Statistics; and Tbilisi State Medical University – Faculty of Preventive Medicine. It was organized by the secretariat with the support of Ms. Manana Juruli, Senior Scientist, Georgian Institute of Labour Medicine and Ecology.

17. The mission to Tbilisi proved useful for gaining an understanding of the local circumstances for the application of a tool such as the checklist, and it provided excellent guidance for its finalization. The main conclusions were as follows:

(a) All experts interviewed agreed that the current transport situation in Tbilisi and in other urban settings in Georgia had significant negative effects on health and environment, and that remedial action was urgently needed. There was also overall agreement on the types of remedial measures needed.

(b) Currently available data did not permit quantitative health impact assessments. It would be useful to strengthen collaboration between institutions and to increase the capacity to assess current exposures and the health situation of the population in relation to transport.

(c) The current lack of local data of sufficient quality was recognized as a major limitation affecting assessment of the impacts of transport activities on health. However, some experts expressed reservations regarding the application of calculated mortality and morbidity data and exposure distribution models based on international studies, which could be a scientifically sound and cost-effective approach given the lack of local epidemiological data. While some experts favoured carrying out local epidemiological studies, others were concerned that this would delay action to address the known negative effects of the current traffic situation.

(d) The diversity of opinions regarding which exposures and health effects should be included in a HIA interfered somewhat with a general appreciation of the HIA concept. In addition, the experience of a previous HIA in Tbilisi⁴ had shown that close collaboration and involvement by the local authorities and main stakeholders was a prerequisite for making a sustainable impact on the local situation. The need for widespread dissemination of the results to stakeholders was stressed.

³ South-Eastern Europe.

⁴ Technical Assistance with Development of an Air Quality Management Plan and Health Effect Study in Tbilisi, August 2002. Ken Stevenson, John Watterson and Mike Holland (representing a UK consulting company “AEA Technology”); Tamaz Budagashvili, Mikheil Tushishvili and Nino Tkhilava (all of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources, Georgia).

B. Subregional workshop, 18–20 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia

18. The third day of the Workshop on Sustainable Urban Transport and Land Use Planning was dedicated to health and environment effects of transport, with a particular focus on EECCA and SEE countries and on the discussion of the Toolbox. The results of the workshop are presented in document ECE/AC.21/SC/2007/5 – EUR/07/5068055/5.

19. The third day was opened by Mr. Nikoloz Pruidze, Deputy Minister of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia. It consisted of two main sessions. The first session introduced assessments of the health and environment impacts of transport, including international policy frameworks, tools and examples as well as the Toolbox project. The second session focused on past and ongoing experiences from EECCA countries, including the conclusions of the mission to test the draft HIA checklist in Tbilisi, followed by a general discussion of further steps for capacity-building and action in the South Caucasus subregion and further development of the Toolbox.

20. The main conclusions were the following:

(a) Experiences in the South Caucasus subregion were similar from country to country, concerning transport-related health and environmental problems in urban areas (mostly related to mounting road traffic injuries and air pollutants emissions); institutional arrangements, resource needs and capacity-building to promote better collaboration across sectors; and greater inclusion of health issues in decisions related to transport. This indicated opportunities for collaboration, cross-fertilization and synergy in actions in this subregion.

(b) There was a need to improve the evidence base of the effects of transport on health and environment, including, for example, monitoring of transport patterns, injury surveillance, fuel and air quality, and the need to harmonize Georgian fuel and air hygienic standards with European Union standards.

(c) There was a need for stronger integration of policies and for dialogue between sectors and stakeholders. For example, the establishment of institutional platforms to facilitate dialogue (e.g. inter-ministerial committees or working groups) should be considered. The workshop was considered a starting point for such solutions.

(d) Long-term investments should be made in strengthening capacity among national experts on environmental health assessments to increase confidence in cost-effective methods, such as modelling and the application of international epidemiological approaches, as opposed to conducting expensive and complex local epidemiological studies. However, a core set of data (e.g. from state-of-the-art air quality monitoring and estimates of children's exposure to key pollutants in heavy traffic areas) would be needed to ensure that modelling reflected local conditions.

(e) Overall, discussions showed that the Toolbox was deemed relevant in view of the interest expressed at the workshop in strengthening capacities for monitoring air quality and the use of HIA tools and methods to be made accessible through the Toolbox.

C. Further subregional workshops

21. The next workshop for the development of the Toolbox will be held in Telč (Czech Republic) (tentatively on 25–27 June 2007). Taking into account the results of the Tbilisi workshop, this workshop could include a half-day capacity-building session focused on legal and administrative tools that facilitate policy integration in transport, environment and health, which are based on the experience of the Czech Republic and other countries and are made available through the Toolbox. The second and third days could be dedicated to feedback from pilot users of the Toolbox to agree on steps to fine-tune the Toolbox.

22. Moldova has expressed interest in hosting a subregional workshop for the development of the Toolbox. The focus and funding sources for this workshop are yet to be determined.

IV. DISSEMINATION OF THE TOOLBOX

23. The dissemination of the Toolbox and advocacy documents should reflect the needs and information usage of the three target audiences. In particular:

(a) A **short advocacy document** will target politicians and decision makers and will be used in advocacy work (e.g. at politically relevant high-level or ministerial meetings). It should also appeal to interested members of the public. It will be written by a communications expert, based on the contents of the full Toolbox, and will be reviewed by specific members of the task force. It will be made available in hard copy and through THE PEP Clearing House.

(b) An **advocacy Toolbox** will target policymakers in the areas of transport, environment and health. It will be widely disseminated through, for example, professional associations, NGOs and local government groups and will be available in hard copy and through THE PEP Clearing House.

(c) The **full Toolbox** will target “practitioners” and should be widely disseminated across Europe and be available through THE PEP Clearing House.

24. The Toolbox should also be made available in Russian.

25. With support from France, a consultant has been commissioned to develop a communication strategy to reach the three main target audiences.

26. Finally, the subregional workshops of THE PEP will increase the visibility of the Toolbox.

V. NEXT STEPS

27. The further implementation of the Toolbox project will consist of the following main next steps (see annex):

(a) 6th task force meeting – back to back with meeting of THE PEP Steering Committee (April 2007)

(b) Finalization of the checklist for HIA

(c) Finalization of evidence briefings and case studies

(d) Technical implementation of the Toolbox and its integration into the Clearing House

(e) Development and start of implementation of the communication strategy

(f) Subregional workshop 2 (Czech Republic) – June 2007 and 7th task force meeting

(g) Subregional workshop 3 (Moldova – tentative) – October 2007 and 8th task force meeting.

Annex

Task Force on Transport-related Health Impacts and Their Costs and Benefits, with a Particular Focus on Children

Work plan and milestones, 2005–2008

Milestones

2005

- Progress Report to THE PEP Steering Committee – April
- 1st task force meeting – April
- 2nd task force meeting – July
- Development of structure of the Toolbox – July–October
- Kick-off meeting (The Hague, Netherlands) and 3rd task force meeting – November
- Progress Report to THE PEP Bureau – December

2006

- Progress Report to THE PEP Steering Committee – April
- 4th task force meeting – April
- Implementation of communication platform – May
- Finalization of workplan – June
- Development of draft template for evidence briefings – July
- Telephone conference task force – July
- Development of draft checklist for health impact assessment (HIA) – August–September
- Testing of HIA checklist – one-week mission to Tbilisi – September
- Subregional workshop 1 on “Health and Environment Impacts of Transport” (in combination with workshop on “Sustainable and Healthy Urban Transport and Planning”), Tbilisi – October
- 5th task force meeting – October
- Development of communication strategy commissioned (France) – October
- Telephone conference task force – November
- Progress Report to THE PEP Bureau – December

2007

- Finalization of templates for evidence briefings and case study descriptions – February
- Telephone conference task force – March
- Start of technical implementation and integration into the Clearing House – April

Further steps

- Finalization of checklist for HIA
- Finalization of evidence briefings and case studies (according to workplan)
- 6th task force meeting – back to back with meeting of THE PEP Steering Committee
- Development and implementation of the communication strategy
- Subregional workshop 2 (Czech Republic) (including launch of a demonstration version of the online Toolbox) – June 2007 and 7th task force meeting
- Subregional workshop 3 (Moldova – tentative) – October 2007 and 8th task force meeting
- Further telephone conferences as needed
- Report to THE PEP Bureau – December 2007
- Report to THE PEP Steering Committee – April 2008 (documents ready by January) and 9th task force meeting
- Publication of the Toolbox in English – Russian edition should also be possible (April 2008)
- 3rd High-level Meeting – 2008 (date to be decided)