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Chair's Summary: Meeting of the Expert Group on Black Carbon and Methane Reykjavik, Iceland, 9 – 10 October 2019

Introduction

The Expert Group on Black Carbon and Methane (EGBCM) held its seventh meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland, on 9 – 10 October 2019. Kristín Linda Árnadóttir (Iceland) chaired the meeting. Participants included the eight Arctic States (Canada, Finland, Kingdom of Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States); one Permanent Participant (Saami Council); four Observer States (Germany, Italy, Poland, Switzerland) and the European Union. From Arctic Council Working Groups (WG), AMAP attended the meeting, and ACAP, EPPR, PAME and SDWG joined the second day to present their cross-cutting work.

Summary of Progress and Recommendations Report 2021

Discussing the 2021 Summary Report, many expressed willingness to look into new formats and ways for delivering the mandate of the group in a concise and easily accessible format, while keeping in mind the [Framework for Action](#) and transparency of the reporting. As current recommendations were still mostly regarded relevant, efforts could be focused more on the implementation, while updating recommendations as necessary. Many experts stressed the importance of promoting the report and its conclusions, recommendations and best practices, and discussed ideas for having a shorter report and making it reader-friendly to a broader audience. Among few ideas were infographics, visualisations, short stories and the idea of a “toolbox” for best practices, which were named as ideas for communicating the results better and attracting the interest of different stakeholders, policy-makers and media. Many shared the view that the value of the group is in its mixed pool of experts, bridging the gap between policy and science.

Data quality

On behalf of the technical group Kaarle Kupiainen (Finland) offered guidance for black carbon (BC) and methane emission reporting and presented issues regarding data quality within the reporting process. He presented suggestions for the forthcoming emission reporting and the timeline. Key years for BC emissions are 2013, the latest available inventory year, and 2025. For methane key years for summaries are the latest available inventory year, 2020 and 2030.

The group concluded that the data is submitted in two sets: first, the emission summaries are included in national reports (due by 31 March 2020), and if necessary, separately sent to the technical team as an Excel file for summaries. The technical team will pull the data from The Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP) and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) databases by default, unless a State indicates they would send an Excel directly to the technical team. In early 2021, States are asked to provide the second data set for the Summary Report, after which it will still be possible to update the data with latest inventories. The technical team will circulate a template for submitting emission estimates after consulting with the Chair on appropriate format and information to be included.

The Chair stressed the need for data improvement and using the latest possible data. Some experts underlined the need for clear guidelines to harmonize the data, especially for states outside Europe and North America that do not report their BC emissions to the CLRTAP.

Simon Wilson gave a presentation on updated activities under the EU Action on Black Carbon (EU BCA) in the Arctic. The recent report "[Review of Reporting Systems for National Black Carbon Emissions Inventories](#)" reviews the status of BC emission reporting systems, including the Arctic Council's EGBCM work. The EU BCA will explore and elaborate the report's recommendations further in an upcoming "Roadmap for International Cooperation on Black Carbon" (2020).

Context of the report

The EGBCM's work builds on and is complementary to AMAP's scientific assessments of the role and impacts of BC and methane. Simon Wilson (AMAP Secretariat) presented AMAP's ongoing work on the 2021 short-lived climate pollutants (SLCP) assessment. The work updates the 2015 assessments of black carbon/tropospheric ozone and methane, and is guided by policy-relevant science questions.

Ragnhildur Finnbjörnsdóttir (Iceland) gave a presentation on the effects of BC on health and introduced the group to latest findings in the field, including one recent study showing that ambient black carbon particles have been observed to reach the fetal side of human placenta.

Priority areas

The work will be organized around the six priority areas with designated experts taking the lead in providing sections for the report. The leads' role will be to coordinate the chapter's content and to be the point of contact for the writing group. Participants agreed to report back on their ability to lead priority areas no later than Friday 15 November 2019. Finland will lead the technical group, with Canada, Russia, the US and Germany taking part.

During a breakout session participants discussed the 2019 Summary Report recommendations and the content to be included under each priority area for the 2021 Summary Report. The Chair asked the experts to share best practices and ideas for a "toolbox", and to identify cross-cutting issues and stakeholders.

To ensure consistency in the Report's priority area chapters, the Chair will provide the group with draft common guidelines by late November 2019. The group agreed to provide input to the guidelines/template in a teleconference mid-November.

Work with Arctic Council Working Groups and other international fora

Arctic Council WGs were invited to present their cross-cutting work relevant to the EGBCM. Inger Johanne Wiese, ACAP Chair, briefed the group about ACAP's SLCP-related work and demonstration projects to reduce black carbon emissions. She also invited the EGBCM Chair to give a presentation at ACAP's workshop "Reducing emissions of black carbon and methane from oil and gas sector operations in the Arctic", which will take place in April 2020 in Moscow, Russia.

PAME Executive Secretary Soffia Gudmundsdóttir presented projects related to Arctic Marine Shipping and heavy-fuel oil. She noted that PAME's Arctic Ship Traffic Database (ASTD), which collects information about shipping activities in the Arctic, can be accessed by EGBCM members without cost.

SDWG Chair Stéfan Skjaldarson presented projects on residential combustion, diesel-powered sources and solid waste. As an example, Arctic Remote Energy Networks Academy (ARENA), assists

communities' capacity building related to the transition from diesel to hybrid and renewable energy systems.

EPPR Chair Jens Peter Holst-Andersen informed the group about the EPPR project proposal "Circumpolar Wildland Fire Cooperation". He welcomed the EGBCM to participate in the project's steering group if the project is accepted. The invitation was positively received, and some experts expressed interest and availability to join the steering group on behalf of the EGBCM.

The Chair concluded that that close communication and meaningful cooperation with the Arctic Council WGs, as well other international fora, is needed to clarify the relevant linkages and to align the work on common themes.

Work program and schedule of the EGBCM

The group revised the draft schedule for 2019-2021. It was agreed that one submission for sector/priority area papers (August 2020) will be sufficient before the first draft of the Summary Report. As for data submission, in the next meeting of the EGBCM the technical team will present the summarized collective picture of the national emissions reporting and a time series. The Chair will provide the group with an updated version of the schedule 2019-2021.

Biennial national reports

It was agreed that clear instructions/template for national reporting will be developed to guide the writing process and to ensure a consistent and concise format. The Chair will invite the group for a teleconference mid-November to discuss the templates both for national reports and priority area sections. The deadline for submitting national reports will be 31 March 2020. The Chair noted that the reports will be made publicly available through the [Arctic Council Open Access Archive](#), as stated in the Framework for Action. The Secretariat will also make the 2017 reports available online, assuming there are no objections.

Any other business

Iceland offered to host the next EGBCM meeting but any offers to host from other participants were also most welcome.