

Air Pollution and Health: a Global Challenge



International Day of Clean Air for blue skies 2022

P. Mudu and K. Shairsingh – 7th of September, 2022

Section introduction

The main topic of our discussion is on air pollution impacts on health and WHO work towards clean air.

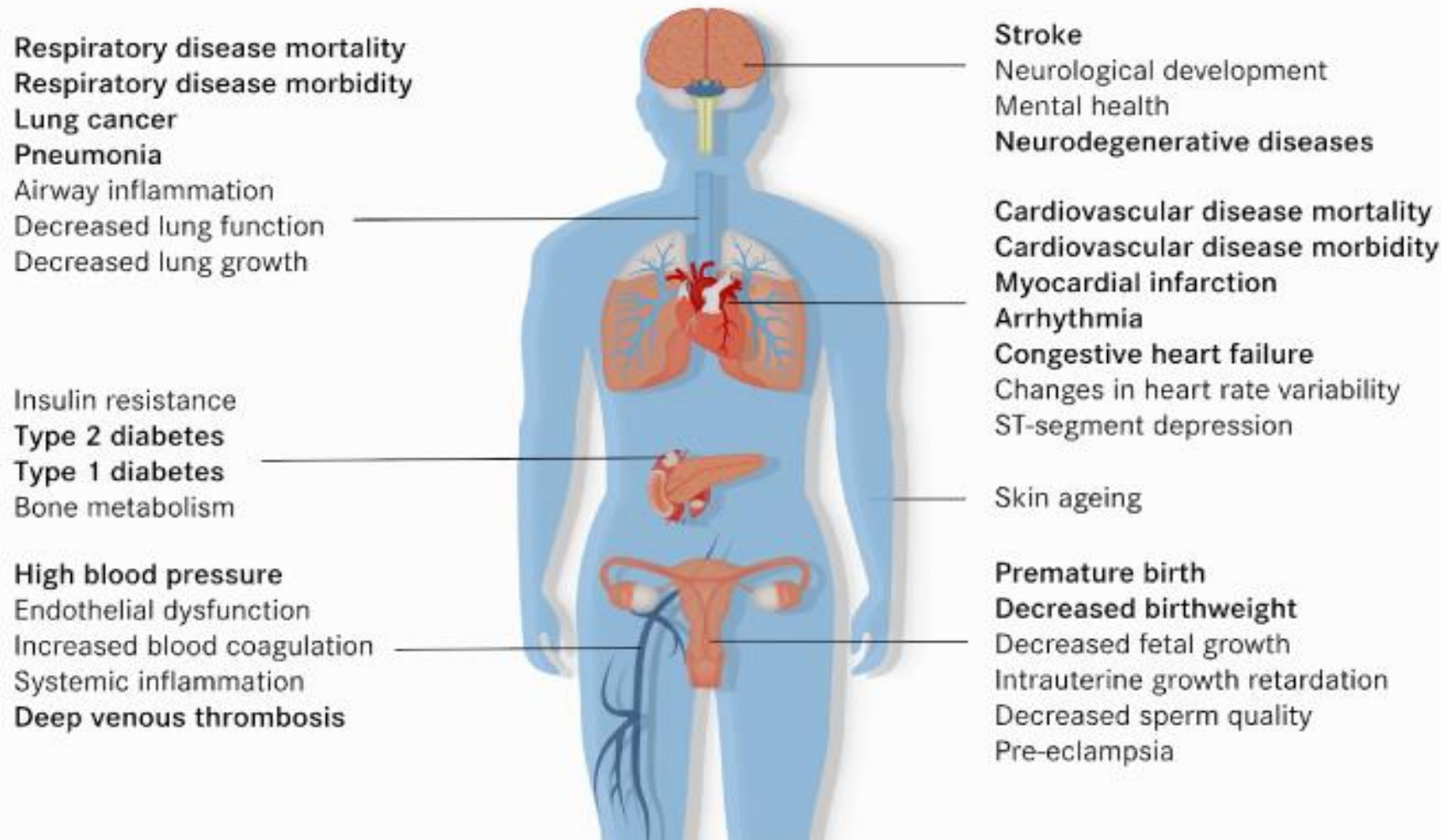
Presentation framework:

Health impacts of exposure to air pollution

Monitoring air quality progress through SDGs

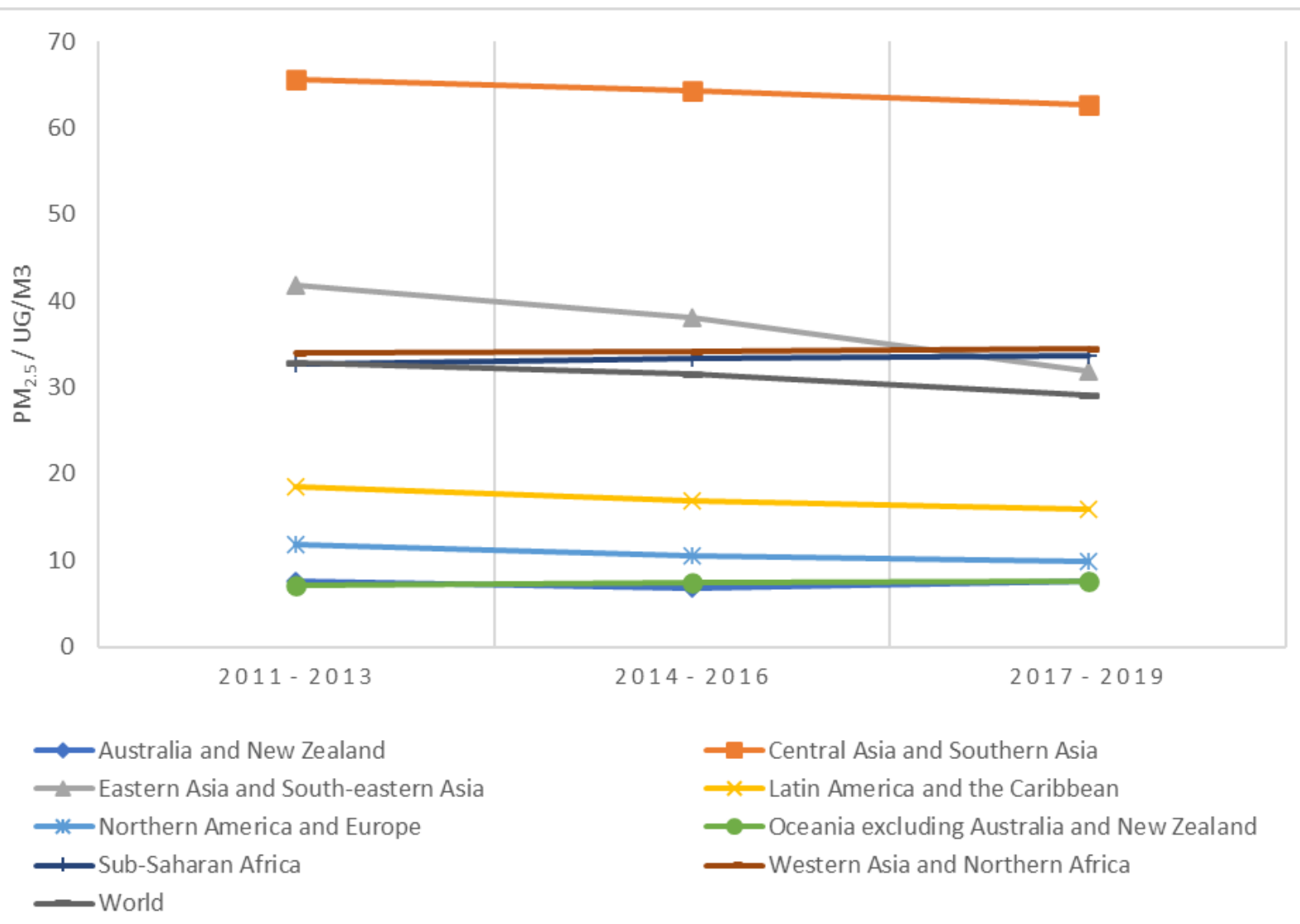
Examples of WHO air pollution initiatives

Air pollution is the second leading cause of deaths from noncommunicable diseases



NCDs caused by air pollution include heart disease, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and lung cancer

Gradual decreases in air pollution but much more room for improvements



- 6.7 million deaths per year in 2019

- Ambient air pollution from traffic, industries, dust caused 4.2 million deaths

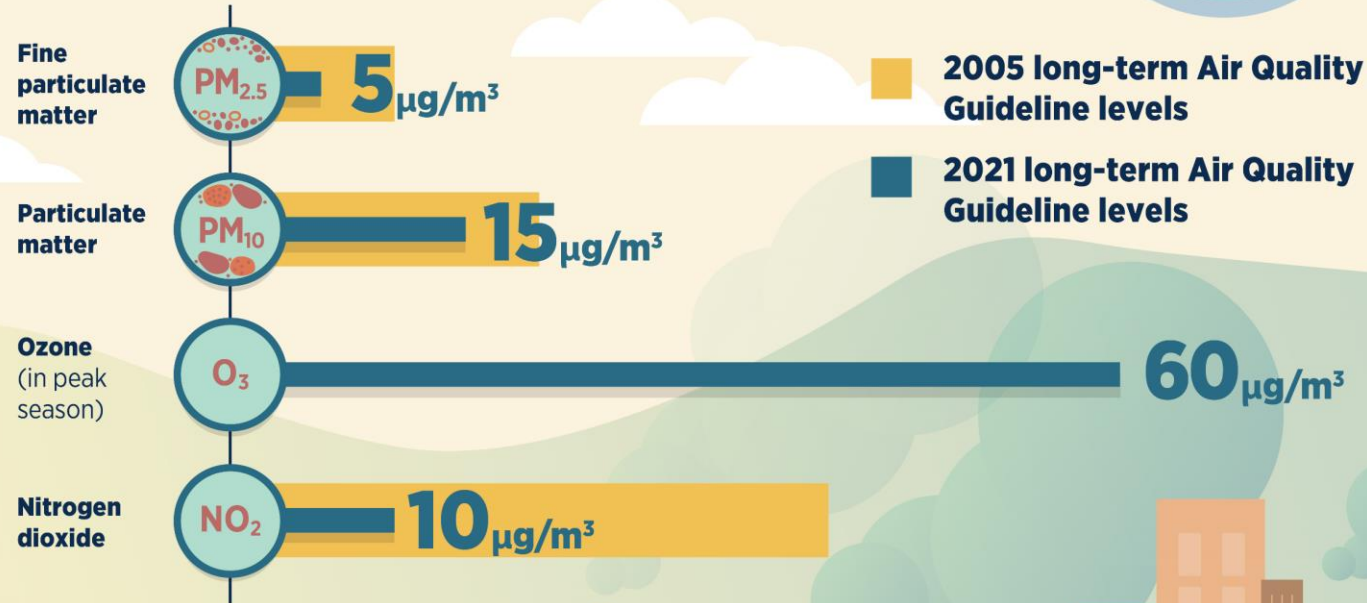
- 3.2 million deaths from household air pollution

- Over 2.4 billion people cooking with polluting fuels and technologies

WHO AIR QUALITY GUIDELINE LEVELS ARE LOWER THAN 15 YEARS AGO



2021 WHO Air Quality Guidelines



Recommended annually

WHO Air Quality Guidelines set goals to protect millions of lives from air pollution.

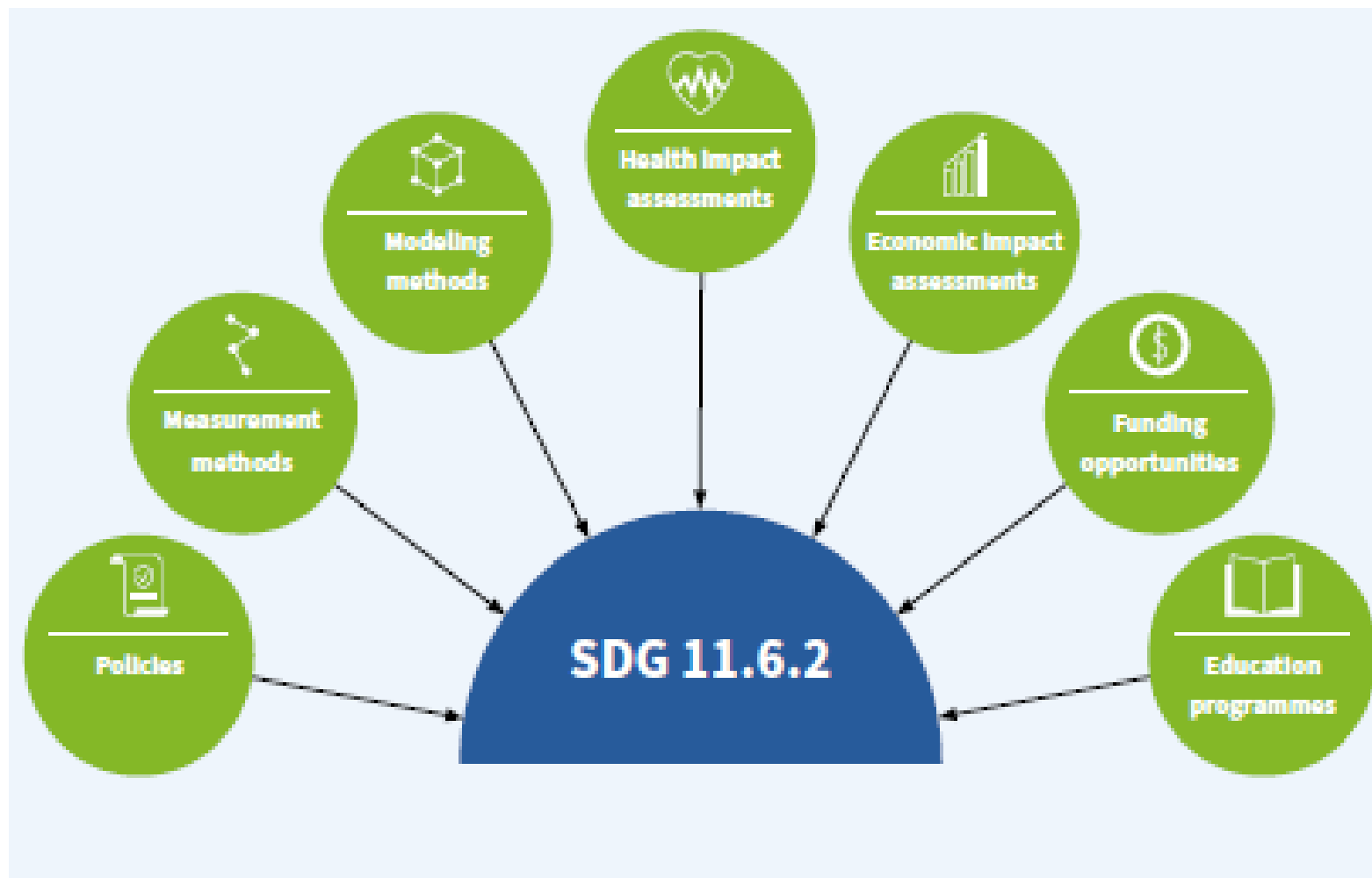
- Based on extensive scientific evidence, the AQGs identify the levels of air quality necessary to **protect public health worldwide**.
- Since the last 2005 global update, there has been a marked **increase in the quality and quantity of evidence** that shows how air pollution affects different aspects of health at lower levels.
- **99% of the world's population lives in areas where air pollution exceeds the WHO AQG**

Working Group on SDG11.6.2 (air quality in cities)

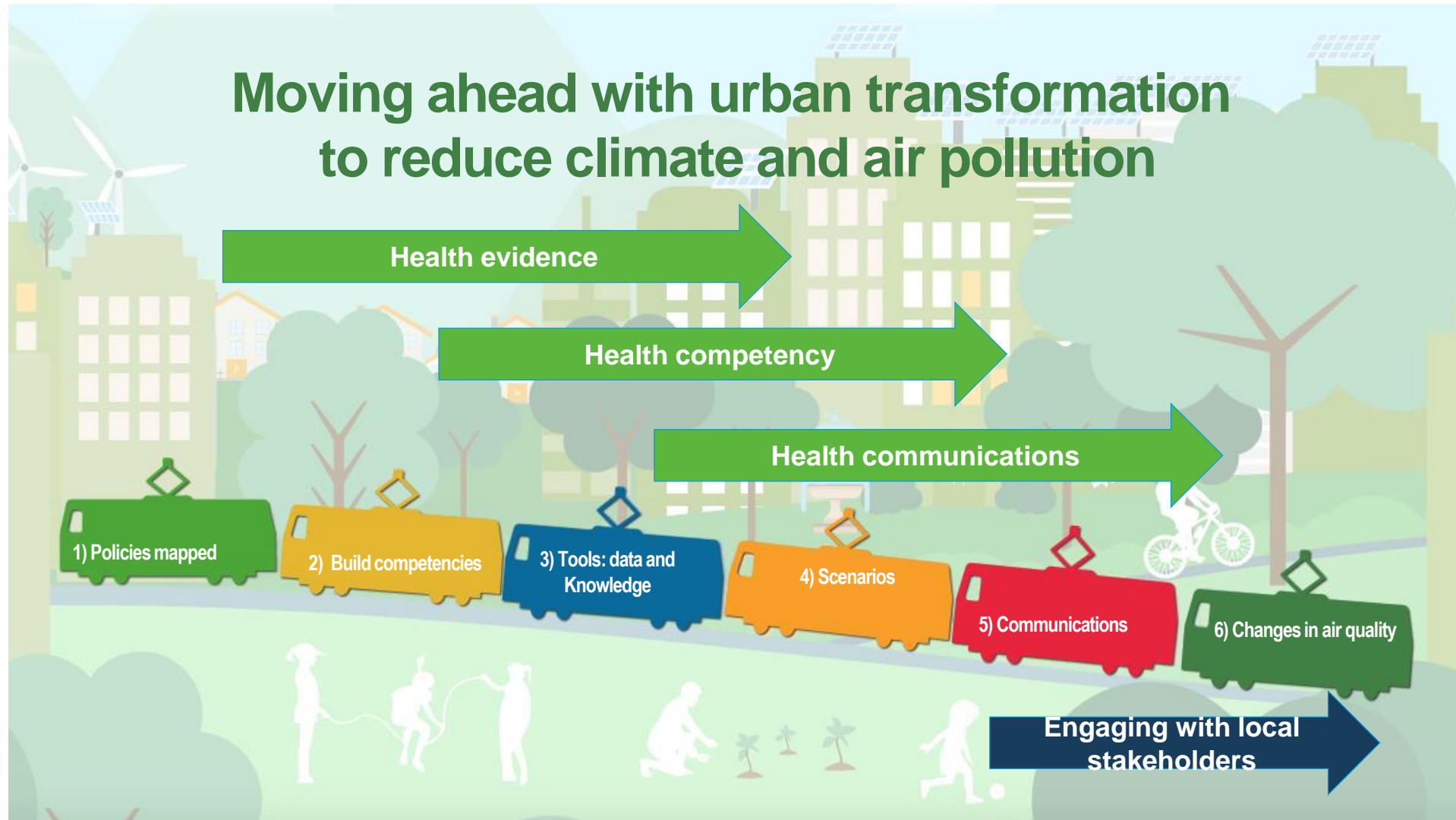
- Repository of over 100 UN tools and guidance documents to support air quality management strategies and reporting criteria for SDG 11.6.2

- Working Group report on SDG11.6.2

<https://www.who.int/groups/sdg-11-6-2-working-group>



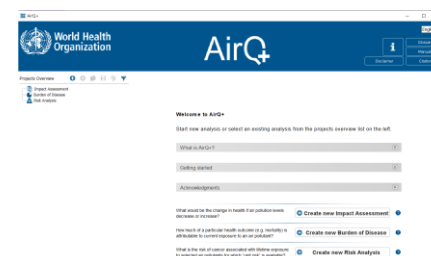
Urban Health Initiative



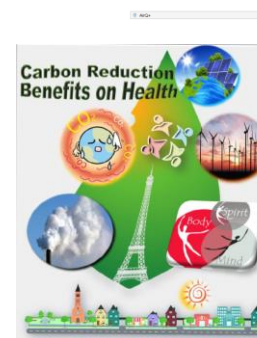
WHO Tools available or under development

WHO is producing and testing various tools:

- **AirQ+**: impacts on health of air pollution



- **CaRBonH** (Carbon Reduction Benefits on Health)



CLIMAQ-H

Climate Mitigation,
Air Quality and
Health

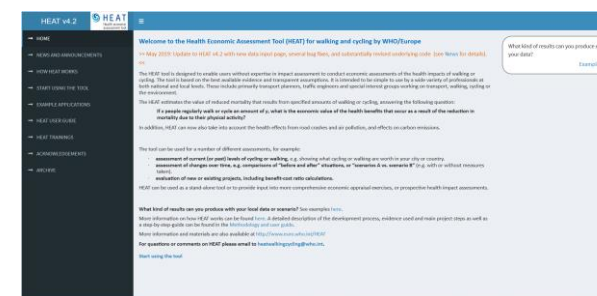


- **GreenUr**



- **HEAT** (Health Economic Assessment Tool):

online tool that conducts an economic assessment of the health benefits of walking or cycling



Health Sector Capacity Building

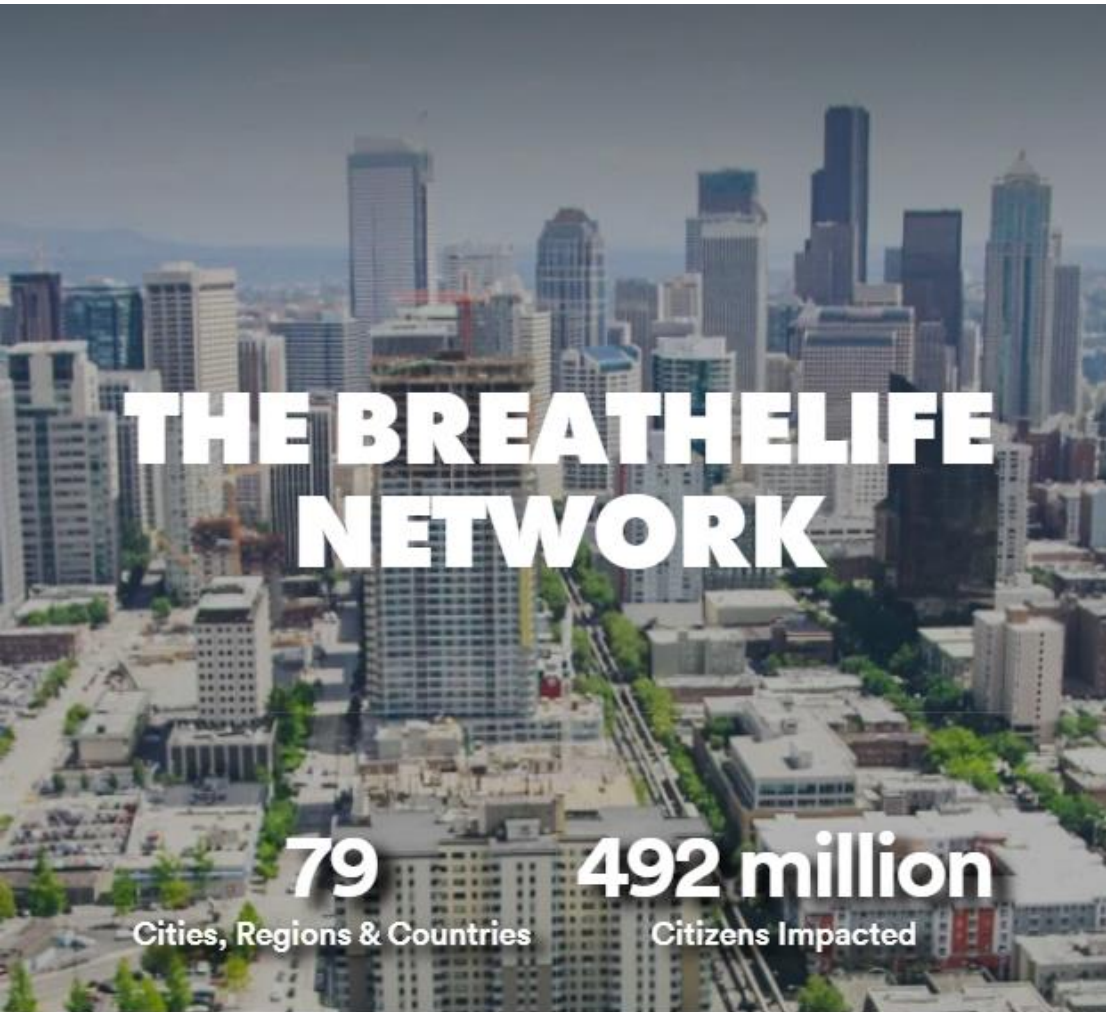
Synthesize Evidence; Develop Guidelines; Track Progress



Developed in collaboration with Governmental agencies, WHO Collaborating Centres, Non-State Actors including environmental health and medical associations, as well as academic institutions.

- Develop evidence-based guidelines supporting effective interventions
- Use Health Impact Assessment (HIA) and other tools to assess policies and their health impacts
- 19 training modules with information on the health impacts of air pollution, interactive clinical case scenarios, practical tools for reducing exposure to air pollution, and tips for engaging with communities to promote clean air
- Adaptation of the material for different audiences, including Community Health Workers
- Pilot workshops in Ghana (June 2022)

BreatheLife Campaign



- Connect cities
- Increase monitoring
- Accelerate solutions
- Empowering individuals

Student
engagement
at **18**
community
schools in
Ghana



Key Messages

- Air pollution is the second leading cause of noncommunicable diseases
- Exposure to air pollution can be harmful even at low levels
- Monitoring of air quality is fundamental for tracking progress in air pollution and protecting public health
- The reduction of anthropogenic source of air pollution can be pursued through several sectoral interventions

Thank you!



P. Mudu, K. Shairsingh
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WHO web sites

Air pollution
[http://www.who.int/topics/
air_pollution/en/](http://www.who.int/topics/air_pollution/en/)

Air quality and health:
[http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-
topics/environment-and-
health/air-quality](http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/environment-and-health/air-quality)