

Annex I

CRITICAL LOADS AND LEVELS

I. CRITICAL LOADS OF ACIDITY

A. For Parties within the geographical scope of EMEP

1. Critical loads (as defined in article 1) of acidity for ecosystems are determined in accordance with the Convention's Manual on methodologies and criteria for mapping critical levels/loads and geographical areas where they are exceeded. They are the maximum amount of acidifying deposition an ecosystem can tolerate in the long term without being damaged. Critical loads of acidity in terms of nitrogen take account of within-ecosystem nitrogen removal processes (e.g. uptake by plants). Critical loads of acidity in terms of sulphur do not. A combined sulphur and nitrogen critical load of acidity considers nitrogen only when the nitrogen deposition is greater than the ecosystem nitrogen removal processes. All critical loads reported by Parties are summarized for use in the integrated assessment modelling employed to provide guidance for setting the emission ceilings in annex II.

B. For Parties in North America

2. For eastern Canada, critical sulphur plus nitrogen loads for forested ecosystems have been determined with scientific methodologies and criteria (1997 Canadian Acid Rain Assessment) similar to those in the Convention's Manual on methodologies and criteria for mapping critical levels/loads and geographical areas where they are exceeded. Eastern Canada critical load values (as defined in article 1) of acidity are for sulphate in precipitation expressed in kg/ha/year. Alberta in western Canada, where deposition levels are currently below the environmental limits, has adopted the generic critical load classification systems used for soils in Europe for potential acidity. Potential acidity is defined by subtracting the total (both wet and dry) deposition of base cations from that of sulphur and nitrogen. In addition to critical loads for potential acidity, Alberta has established target and monitoring loads for managing acidifying emissions.

3. For the United States of America, the effects of acidification are evaluated through an assessment of the sensitivity of ecosystems, the total loading within ecosystems of acidifying compounds, and the uncertainty associated with nitrogen removal processes within ecosystems.

4. These loads and effects are used in integrated assessment modelling and provide guidance for setting the emission ceilings and/or reductions for Canada and the United States of America in annex II.

II. CRITICAL LOADS OF NUTRIENT NITROGEN

For Parties within the geographical scope of EMEP

5. Critical loads (as defined in article 1) of nutrient nitrogen (eutrophication) for ecosystems are determined in accordance with the Convention's Manual on methodologies and criteria for mapping critical levels/loads and geographical areas where they are exceeded. They are the maximum amount of eutrophying nitrogen deposition an ecosystem can tolerate in the long term without being damaged. All critical loads reported by Parties are summarized for use in the integrated assessment modelling employed to provide guidance for setting the emission ceilings in annex II.

III. CRITICAL LEVELS OF OZONE

A. For Parties within the geographical scope of EMEP

6. Critical levels (as defined in article 1) of ozone are determined to protect plants in accordance with the Convention's Manual on methodologies and criteria for mapping critical levels/loads and geographical areas where they are exceeded. They are expressed as a cumulative exposure over a threshold ozone concentration of 40 ppb (parts per billion by volume). This exposure index is referred to as AOT40 (accumulated exposure over a threshold of 40 ppb). The AOT40 is calculated as the sum of the differences between the hourly concentration (in ppb) and 40 ppb for each hour when the concentration exceeds 40 ppb.

7. The long-term critical level of ozone for crops of an AOT40 of 3000 ppb.hours for May-July (used as a typical growing season) and for daylight hours was used to define areas at risk where the critical level is exceeded. A specific reduction of exceedances was targeted in the integrated assessment modelling undertaken for the present Protocol to provide guidance for setting the emission ceilings in annex II. The long-term critical level of ozone for crops is considered also to protect other plants such as trees and natural vegetation. Further scientific work is under way to develop a more differentiated interpretation of exceedances of critical levels of ozone for vegetation.

8. A critical level of ozone for human health is represented by the WHO Air Quality Guideline level for ozone of 120 µg/m³ as an 8-hour average. In collaboration with the World Health Organization's Regional Office for Europe (WHO/EURO), a critical level expressed as an AOT60 (accumulated exposure over a threshold of 60 ppb), i.e. 120 µg/m³, calculated over one year, was adopted as a surrogate for the WHO Air Quality Guideline for the purpose of integrated assessment modelling. This was used to define areas at risk where the critical level is exceeded. A specific reduction of these exceedances was targeted in the integrated assessment modelling undertaken for the present Protocol to provide guidance for setting the emission ceilings in annex II.

B. For Parties in North America

9. For Canada, critical levels of ozone are determined to protect human health and the environment and are used to establish a Canada-wide Standard for ozone. The emission ceilings in annex II are defined according to the ambition level required to achieve the Canada-wide Standard for ozone.

10. For the United States of America, critical levels of ozone are determined to protect public health with an adequate margin of safety, to protect public welfare from any known or expected adverse effects, and are used to establish a national ambient air quality standard. Integrated assessment modelling and the air quality standard are used in providing guidance for setting the emission ceilings and/or reductions for the United States of America in annex II.