



IEAGHG Information Paper; 2013-IP29; HFC's Amendment Stalled

The group of greenhouse gases known as Hydrofluorocarbons (HFC's) has been in the news of late. There have been several initiatives on this gas that we have reported on in recent months. The gas was introduced as a replacement for chlorofluorocarbon's (CFC's) under the Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the ozone layer which were to be phased out under the agreement. HFC's were deployed under the Montreal protocol as an interim measure and the call to phase them out in recent years has been growing. In fact these gases have a double edged sword as they have a lesser effect on ozone depletion than CFC's but have a high GWP as well. However despite their GWP their phased out is controlled under the Montreal Protocol not the Kyoto Protocol.

The 25th Meeting of Parties (MOP) to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that deplete the ozone layer was held in Bangkok Thailand between the 21st and 25th October this year. The meeting was expected to come up with an agreement to expand the Montreal Protocol to regulate HFCs but disappointingly this failed to materialise.

Prior to the MOP in Bangkok the G20 summit in St. Petersburg, Russia, agreed on 13 September to phase down the use of certain potent greenhouse gases known to damage the climate. The White House, cited the agreement to cooperate on phasing down the use of (HFC's), gases used in refrigerators, air conditioners and some industrial equipment, as one of the "most significant agreements" of the summit. "This commitment marks an important step forward toward addressing HFCs - highly potent greenhouse gases that are rapidly increasing in use - through the proven mechanism of the Montreal Protocol," the White House said in a fact sheet. Addressing HFCs also has climate benefits and can reduce as much as 90 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) equivalent between now and 2050, the White House said.

The details of the Agreement to phase out HFC's were then expected to be sorted out at the MOP in Bangkok. A concrete decision in favour of regulating HFC's was therefore expected following such an endorsement by leaders of the Group of 20 (G20) in September.

There were two separate proposals presented at the Meeting of the Parties, one by Micronesia, Morocco and the Maldives and the second by Canada, Mexico and the United States, that would expand the Montreal Protocol to regulate HFC's. The [individual](#) proposals to amend the Montreal Protocol can be found at:

<http://conf.montreal-protocol.org/meeting/mop/mop-25/presession/default.aspx>

As part of the Canadian, Mexican and US proposal a paper was posted on recent scientific publications of HFC's and climate change. For those interested this can be found at: <http://conf.montreal-protocol.org/meeting/mop/mop-25/presession/default.aspx>

However at the MOP in Bangkok India, joined by Saudi Arabia, blocked consideration of the amendments. This was a disappointing outcome following several years of work to preparatory work. Equally disappointing was the fact that as India was a signatory to the G20 agreement. Progress on the inclusion of HFC's in the Montreal Protocol for the moment has therefore stalled.

However all is not yet lost, the delegates at the Meeting of the parties called for a technical report on HFC alternatives and a formal workshop on the issue next year.



The Technology and Economic Assessment Panel (TEAP)¹ was mandated, to prepare a report for consideration by the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG)² at its thirty-fourth meeting and an updated report to be submitted to the Twenty-Sixth Meeting of the Parties that will:

- (a) Update information on alternatives to ozone-depleting substances
- (b) Estimate current and future demand for ODS alternatives, taking into account increased demand, particularly in the refrigeration and air conditioning sectors,
- (c) Assess the economic costs and implications, and environmental benefits, of various scenarios of avoiding high GWP alternatives to ozone depleting substances where such avoidance is possible
- (d) Request the Scientific Assessment Panel (SAP)³, in liaison with the IPCC, to provide information from the contribution of WG1 to the 5th assessment report on the main climate metrics, considering the updated information under (a)

The time schedule for this report is to be ready for the 34th meeting of the OEWG that is typically held in June to August each year.

The Twenty-Sixth Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol will be held in Nairobi, Kenya, in November 2014 .

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¹ Technology and Economic Assessment Panel (TEAP) provides, at the request of Parties, technical information related to the alternative technologies that have been investigated and employed to make it possible to virtually eliminate use of Ozone Depleting Substances (such as CFCs and Halons), that harm the ozone layer. TEAP provides reports and documents produced by itself and its specific Technical Options Committees (TOCs) and Task Forces.

² This is the working group below the MOP that considers reports from TEAP etc., and makes recommendations to the MOP itself.

³ The Scientific Assessment Panel (SAP) assesses the status of the depletion of the ozone layer and relevant atmospheric science issues. Pursuant to Article 6 of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, a report is prepared every three or four years by the SAP which consists of hundreds of top scientists from around the world. Any emerging scientific issues of importance are brought to the attention of the Parties by the SAP Co-Chairs for consideration at the Meetings of the Parties.