

BEHAV-I-AIR Needs Statements

Updated problem statements 26/10/2023

Contents

BEHAV-I-AIR Needs Statements.....	1
Updated problem statements 26/10/2023	1
Summary	1
Theme 1a: Communication needs – Understanding risk	1
Theme 1b: Communication needs: Envisioning behaviours.....	4
Theme 1c: Communication needs – Civic engagement.....	6
Theme 2: Beyond communication - Supportive policies and Infrastructures.....	8

Summary

The statements included in this document were created based on consultations with 57 stakeholders (36 interviews; 21 involved in focus group) in Cork and beyond.

Broadly speaking, there are two macro needs:

1. Communication needs related to a) understanding the risks associated with air pollution, b) envisioning contributing behaviours; c) mobilising civic engagement.
2. Needs beyond communication, related to supportive policies and infrastructures for clean air.

The needs are stated as problems expressed by our stakeholders, and the desirable outcomes they shared.

Theme 1a: Communication needs – Understanding risk

Problem #1

Problem	Public understanding of air quality risks and solutions is hindered by technical language and difficult access to data.
Desirable Outcome	Information about air quality issues and solutions is communicated in a way that is easy to understand and in a format that is accessible

Problem #2

Problem	Introducing air quality public alerts could help prevent health risks associated with pollution, but they could cause alarmism and/or confusion among members of the public
Desirable Outcome	Air quality public alerts, if introduced, are formulated so that people can understand the risk as well as actionable coping solutions

Problem #3

Problem	Currently air quality communication is mostly reactive when extreme events take place and not focused also on prevention of polluting behaviours or health risks
Desirable Outcome	Strategies for proactive air quality communication are put in place to better prevent health risks

Problem #5

Problem	High levels of air pollution at certain times of the year (particularly in winter) limit people's freedom to enjoy outdoor activities safely in our community, because of the risk of being exposed to unhealthy polluted air
Desirable Outcome	People are free to use outdoor spaces safely throughout the year without worrying about the risk of being exposed to polluted air

Problem #6

Problem	There is low public awareness of the higher health risks caused by air pollution for specific vulnerable groups (e.g., children, people with respiratory issues)
Desirable Outcome	Members of the public are aware of the fact that certain groups are particularly vulnerable to the health risks associated with air pollution and that they need to be protected

Problem #8

Problem	It is difficult to understand the relationship between certain air quality-related behaviours (in particular, solid fuel burning or transport) and health risks
Desirable Outcome	The public have more awareness of the health impacts of polluting behaviours (e.g. solid fuel burning, transport)

Problem #27

Problem	The information about air pollution risks and solutions that is currently available does not have an impact on behavioural change because it is not perceived as personally relevant
Desirable Outcome	Information about air pollution speaks to the needs and preferences of people in different settings to empower action and behavioural change

Theme 1b: Communication needs: Envisioning behaviours

Problem #9

Problem	Outdoor school spaces are not safe for children and adults' breathing because of motor traffic and idling vehicles
Desirable Outcome	The air outside schools is safe to breathe because motor vehicle idling and traffic are reduced in those areas

Problem #10

Problem	Outdoor hospital spaces are not safe for breathing because of motor traffic and idling vehicles
Desirable Outcome	The air outside hospital is safe to breathe because motor vehicle idling and traffic are reduced in those areas

Problem #11

Problem	Solid fuel burning for home heating contributes greatly to air pollution, but the cultural habit of lighting a fire is an important barrier to reduce indoor and outdoor air pollution
Desirable Outcome	Households are supported in understanding the pollution and health risks associated with solid fuel burning and in reducing this behaviour, where possible

Problem #12

Problem	Combustion engine vehicles contribute greatly to air pollution, but the culture of motor car dominance and dependence is an important barrier to reduce air pollution associated with motor traffic
Desirable Outcome	People are supported in understanding the pollution and health risks associated with motor traffic and in prioritising use of public transport and active travel, where possible

Problem #19

Problem	Communicating to the public issues related to air quality based only on digital technologies (e.g., apps, social media, Internet) risks excluding certain groups of people
Desirable Outcome	Air quality communication includes different channels and formats (digital and non-digital) to promote social inclusion

Problem #25

Problem	Limiting exposure to air pollution is part of a healthy lifestyle, but supporting people to protect themselves from air pollution is limited by unclear health promotion guidance on air pollution impacts
Desirable Outcome	Health promotion guidance and initiatives incorporate information about air pollution related risks and strategies for prevention that can be used to help the public engage in healthy behaviours.

Problem #28

Problem	Informing the public about behaviours that contribute to air pollution and the need to reduce those behaviours can cause shame and resistance if the communication is not positively framed and action-oriented
Desirable Outcome	Public communication about polluting behaviours is positively framed to empower action

Theme 1c: Communication needs – Civic engagement

Problem #4

Problem	Schools are important communities for educating the public on air pollution risks, but introducing new initiatives on air quality can overburden them as they are already very busy
Desirable Outcome	Schools are supported in promoting air quality education in an effective and integrated way, avoiding duplication across multiple initiatives

Problem #7

Problem	Low trust and little partnership between science and society limit civic engagement for clean air
Desirable Outcome	Greater collaboration and communication around air quality issues are promoted between scientists, news media, and broader society

Problem #13

Problem	Public interest in issues related to air pollution is limited to few individuals and groups because communication of this topic is poor and not widespread
Desirable Outcome	Public communication about air quality reaches and mobilises different individuals and groups across the community, beyond those already interested in the topic

Problem #15

Problem	Urban planning and design have an impact on air quality, however, the impacts of urban development initiatives on air quality are not considered in public consultations and decision processes
Desirable Outcome	Public consultations and decision processes related to urban development are informed by potential impacts on air quality to promote clean air through design and planning

Problem #23

Problem	Implementing solutions for clean air is difficult because organisations and agencies trying to promote health and sustainable development often act independently and don't coordinate their actions
Desirable Outcome	Different agencies and organisations are incentivised to work together to promote solutions for clean air, health, and sustainable development

Theme 2: Beyond communication - Supportive policies and Infrastructures

Problem #14

Problem	Green spaces are important for clean air and active lifestyles, but these benefits are hindered by the low availability of green spaces in urban areas
Desirable Outcome	More green spaces are developed in urban areas to promote active lifestyles and clean air

Problem #16

Problem	The people most exposed to harmful air pollution are often not the ones who contribute the most to the problem and are often the ones with the least resources to tackle polluting behaviour
Desirable Outcome	Policies and strategies for clean air are informed by "just" strategies to decrease exposure and empower change for disadvantaged groups

Problem #18

Problem	The current transport infrastructures and policies for public and active transport have a negative impact on air quality because they limit opportunities for people to avoid using the car for their day-to-day trips
Desirable Outcome	Transport policies are shifted towards promoting clean air through prioritisation of active and public transport infrastructures and reduction of car dependence

Problem #20

Problem	Air pollution is known to harm people's health, but poor management and barriers in sharing health data (e.g. due to privacy) limits a precise estimation of the impacts of air pollution on health.
Desirable Outcome	Improved management and integration of health data enables better estimation of health risks associated with air pollution

Problem #21

Problem	The promotion of clean air requires political commitment to improve current policies and strategies, but such commitment is currently lacking.
Desirable Outcome	Policymakers commit to prioritise and incentivise clean air policies and strategies

Problem #22

Problem	Local authorities have an important role to play in the promotion of air quality, but their power to advance local clean air priorities is limited by a centralised governmental system
Desirable Outcome	A more decentralised governmental structure for decision-making processes empowers local authorities to promote local solutions for clean air

Problem #24

Problem	There is poor enforcement of rules to reduce polluting behaviours related to transport or home heating
Desirable Outcome	Reductions in polluting behaviours are effectively incentivised through enforcement

Problem #26

Problem	There are limited public resources (staff, funding, infrastructure) to implement effective public communication of risk and solutions associated with air pollution
Desirable Outcome	Appropriate public resources are identified and supported to implement effective air quality-related communication