

The Asian Co-benefits Partnership (ACP) serves as an informal and interactive platform to improve information sharing and stakeholder coordination on co-benefits in Asia. The ACP was launched with the support of the Ministry of the Environment, Japan in 2010 to help mainstream climate and environmental co-benefits into decision-making processes in Asia. Learn more about us at our website. <http://www.cobenefit.org/>.



Highlights

Making Air Pollution Relevant to Policymakers in Asia



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What were the main changes in the understanding of policymakers of air pollution and climate in Asia over the past decade?

About ten years ago, I was involved in a couple of projects related to climate change and air pollution in South and Southeast Asia. I was invited to make a presentation to policymakers from countries of the Mekong region by the newly formed Greater Mekong Sub-region project of the Asian Development Bank. A part of the meeting consisted of presentations to policymakers on regional biodiversity conservation challenges.

Most of the environmental presentations focused on water and biodiversity, including deforestation, wetland conservation, wildlife trade, payment for environmental services, and related issues. There were four presentations on the impacts of climate change and air pollution on the ecosystems and water resources of the Mekong region and why emissions reductions needed to be addressed.

It was clear that the senior policymakers at the meeting considered that most of the material being presented represented the same old ideas dressed in new clothing. The issues were important but the policymakers had heard it before and, for various reasons, they found the issues difficult to address. In direct contrast, the presentations on potential impacts of climate change and air pollution on the population and some of the major economic resources of the region were eye-opening (literally). They led to many discussions

about the scientific basis of the impact assessments. It was clear that there was a dawning of understanding that these issues needed to be taken more seriously.

It was not that policymakers were unaware of these issues a decade ago. Discussions with Environment Ministers of several countries in Asia at that time suggested awareness, but the issues were on a very long list of bad-things-that-need-to-be-addressed. Actions to address climate change and air pollution were on the long list but not on the to-do list for policymakers.

Among the changes in the last decade has been a much stronger understanding among policymakers of the economic dimensions of potential impacts and assessments of cost-benefits and cost-effectiveness of actions to address the issues by reducing emissions and adaptation. This improved understanding has been helped by global and regional assessments and meetings of policymakers resulting in various international commitments. The similarities among actions to address air pollution and climate change led to better integration of policies on these issues.

What are the main challenges to improve understanding by policymakers of air pollution and climate in Asia?

The main challenge continues to be the economic dimensions of potential impacts and assessments of cost-benefits and cost-effectiveness of actions to address these impacts of climate change and air pollution at a national scale. There is a need for far

greater understanding at a national level of the estimated costs of impacts, costs of business-as-usual, economic benefits of investments to reduce impacts and who will bear the costs of actions and inaction. There is also a need to identify the actions that will produce the greatest benefits at the lowest cost that can be successfully implemented at a national level. Doubts about these issues enable those who may be economically disadvantaged by actions to obstruct cost-saving policy changes.

How do you think the regional assessment report (tentatively titled *Atmospheric Pollution in the Asia Pacific: Science based Solutions*) that you are co-chairing can help over those challenges?

The regional assessment will support national efforts to

address atmospheric pollution in the Asia Pacific by providing actionable options to reduce emissions. The report will identify a package of a limited number of measures that bring the greatest benefits for human health, crop yields, climate, environment as well as socioeconomic development. The report will also provide a clear picture of the costs and benefits of each measure and will offer implementation guidance with real-life case studies. It will also act as a platform to share experiences with practical actions to prevent and control atmospheric pollution.

The regional assessment report is intended to be used by professionals and practitioners and inform policy makers working in the areas of air pollution and climate change. It will assist them in developing national policies and strategies to address air pollution using proven, cost effective, readily implementable actions.



Updates

The ACP Good Practice Map was created in early 2016 to share illustrations of the vast and varied approaches taken to achieve co-benefits in key sectors in Asia (i.e. energy/industry, transportation, waste management, and biomass/fuel). As of February 2017, ten new cases (to the initial 10) have been added from Cambodia, China, Japan, Lao PDR, Nepal, Thailand, and Vietnam. A new "livelihood" sector has also been included to capture the important social benefits that come when women are engaged in climate change mitigation in three Mekong region countries.



Publications

Christopher Nicholas Hideo Doll and Jose A. Puppim de Oliveira (eds.) 2017. *Urbanization and Climate Co-Benefits: Implementation of Win-Win Interventions in Cities*, Routledge: London.



Activities

The Japan Committee for IIASA and UNU-IAS co-organised the International Symposium: IIASA and Japan – Future prospects for closer collaboration centering around "The World in 2050 (TWI2050)" Project on 31st January 2017. See more details: http://www.iges.or.jp/en/network/iiasa_20170131.html

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