ACP ASIAN Co-benefits Partnership

The Co-benefits Corner
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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

Promoting Climate and Sustainable Synergies Globally, in Japan and Across Asia

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What are the main challenges and opportunities in promoting synergies between climate change and sustainable development globally?

To answer this question, it is important to recognize that the world is at a critical juncture in achieving the 1.5°C goal set out in the Paris Agreement. It is increasingly clear that we must ramp up climate ambition over the next five years to stay on track. We, therefore, need to seize every opportunity to reduce emissions. One key opportunity in this regard is leveraging the connections between climate action and sustainable development.

When considering synergies, one concrete approach is reducing energy consumption while ensuring prosperity and improving quality of life. A major global trend supporting this shift is the rise of digitalization and electrification, both of which can drive progress in climate action and enhance livelihoods. As seen in the history of the internet, embracing innovation can lead to transformations across multiple sectors.

However, a key challenge is that digitalization and electrification may initially increase energy demand. Policymakers must, therefore, be strategic in supporting these transitions. Solutions such as utilizing data centres to flexibly absorb variable renewable energy and applying AI-driven learning processes to balance energy supply will be essential in addressing this challenge.

What are the main challenges and opportunities in promoting synergies between climate change and sustainable development in Japan?

In response to this question, I would like to highlight a report I co-developed: the 1.5°C Roadmap for Japan. This report underscores how ambitious climate action can significantly advance multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For instance, it demonstrates that through rapid socio-economic transformations—driven not only by digitalization but also by social change—Japan can reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by over 60% compared to 2019 levels by 2035. Moreover, leveraging these synergies can contribute to SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), all while fostering economic growth and innovation.

Another key area highlighted in the report is the role of renewable energy-based power systems and energy efficiency measures. Advancements in these areas can enhance Japan's energy self-sufficiency, supporting SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy). Additionally, the expansion of renewable energy—particularly rooftop photovoltaic installations and offshore wind power—can create local employment opportunities, contributing to SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and SDG 8. Implementing these strategies requires policy measures such as mandatory photovoltaic installations on new buildings, financial incentives, and community engagement to maximize benefits and minimize potential negative impacts on local environments.

What are the main challenges and opportunities in promoting synergies between climate change and sustainable development in developing countries in Asia?

The key to leveraging synergies in developing Asia is recognizing the diversity of the region. The approach

taken by South Korea, for example, will differ significantly from that of India. To illustrate these differences, I would like to provide two examples: Vietnam and Bangladesh. These two countries are likely to adopt different approaches to integrating climate action with sustainable development due to their unique economic structures and vulnerabilities.

In Vietnam, the focus is likely to be on green growth and industrial transformation, expanding renewable energy (solar and wind) to support a transition away from coal while maintaining economic competitiveness. The country prioritizes sustainable urbanization, with smart city projects and flood-resilient infrastructure in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi. Vietnam is also investing in low-carbon industrialization, promoting green supply chains in key export sectors such as electronics and textiles. Coastal resilience efforts – including sustainable fisheries and mangrove restoration – further support economic growth and climate adaptation. With strong international partnerships, Vietnam is attracting green financing, particularly through initiatives like the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP), which could further enhance synergies.

Bangladesh, in contrast, is more likely to focus on climate adaptation and social resilience due to its extreme vulnerability to rising sea levels and natural disasters. The country prioritizes disaster risk reduction through early warning systems, cyclone shelters, and flood-resilient housing. It also promotes nature-based solutions, such as large-scale mangrove restoration and floating agriculture, to further support vulnerable communities. Bangladesh emphasizes off-grid solar energy, expanding access in rural areas rather than prioritizing large-scale industrial energy transitions. Community-led adaptation efforts, particularly those involving women and microfinance initiatives, strengthen social and economic resilience. These efforts are also more likely to emphasize poverty alleviation as a primary objective.

Updates

The 5th Asia Pacific Clean Air Partnership (APCAP) Joint Forum

The Asia Pacific region continues to be at the forefront of the fight against air pollution. The APCAP is regional initiatives working to strengthen international cooperation on air quality in Asia Pacific with an understanding that improving air quality bring co-benefits to confront climate change and sustainable development. The 5th APCAP Joint Forum will be held in March to inform the state of air quality in the region and recognise progress made to address air pollution at multiple levels, share and exchange innovative solutions reducing emissions with climate co-benefits as well as to accelerate action through regional and inter-regional cooperation for clean air. The discussions will contribute to the Progress Update of the Implementation of UNEA Resolution 6/10 to be submitted at the 7th Session of UNEA and to the commemoration of the 6th International Day of Clean Air for blue skies.

For more information and registration, visit: https://cleanairweek.org/

Publications

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- Moutet, L., Bernard, P., Green, R., Milner, J., Haines, A., Slama, R., Temime, L. and Jean, K. (2025) The public health co-benefits of strategies consistent with net-zero emissions: a systematic review. *The Lancet Planetary Health* 9(2): E145-156
- Zhang, X., Yin, S., Lu, X., Liu, Y., Wang, T., Zhang, B., Li, Z., Wang, W., Kong, M. and Chen, K. (2025) Establish an air pollutants and greenhouse gases emission inventory and co-benefits of their reduction of the transportation sector in Central China. *Journal of Environmental Sciences* 150: 604-621

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