



National Workshop on Unlocking Finance to Support Climate and Clean Air Solutions in India

Date & venue: 8-9 August 2024, India Habitat Center, New Delhi

Post-event Press Release, 9th August 2024

The National Productivity Council (NPC) in collaboration with Massive Earth Foundation and supported by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) successfully hosted a two-day national workshop titled "Unlocking Finance to Support Climate and Clean Air Solutions in India" at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, on 8-9 August 2024. This event brought together leading experts, government officials, industry representatives and international organizations to explore strategies for financing clean air initiatives and promoting sustainable development in India.

Background

Air pollution poses significant health risks and economic burdens, costing South Asia around 10.3% of GDP in 2019. Major pollution sources include coal burning, biomass burning, transport, industrial emissions and open waste burning. Despite available solutions, inadequate financing hampers their implementation.

The workshop focused on addressing this funding gap by exploring potential mechanisms, with a special emphasis on climate finance as a largely untapped resource. The event encouraged cross-sector collaboration to drive air quality improvements, offering both health and economic benefits.

Inaugural Session

The workshop commenced with a welcome address by **Mr. S. Gopalakrishnan, IAS, Director General, NPC**, who emphasized the importance of productivity and sustainable development in achieving net-zero carbon emissions. The inaugural address was delivered by **Mr. Mozaharul Alam, Officer-in-Charge, UNEP India Country Office**, who highlighted UNEP's efforts in promoting clean air solutions across the Asia-Pacific region. **Mr. Yu Kamei, Director, Office of International Cooperation, Environmental Management Bureau, Govt. of Japan** underlined the emphasis being given by the Govt. of Japan in promoting technologies for improving air quality in different countries in the Asia Pacific region.

Asia Pacific Clean Air Partnership

Ms. Kakuko Yoshida Nagatani, UNEP Global coordinator for chemical and pollution action subprogramme, informed about the partnership which aims to improve air quality across Asia-Pacific region. She spoke about need to attract investments and develop robust financial models leading to tangible improvements in air quality.

Key Discussions and Panels

Throughout the two days, various sessions focused on identifying air pollution causes, sector-specific innovations, developing bankable projects, and understanding the diverse funding schemes available for clean air initiatives.

- 1. Co-Benefits Approach: Air Pollution and Climate Change**
 - o This session, moderated by **Mr. Yoshinori Momose from Japan's Ministry of the Environment**, emphasized the need for a co-benefits approach, integrating air pollution and climate change strategies. The Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM) was highlighted as an example of successful international cooperation.
- 2. Panel Discussion: Air Pollution, Its Sources, and Solutions**
 - o Led by **Mr. Shailesh Vickram Singh, Founder of Massive Earth Foundation**, the panel featured experts from the Ministry of Environment, WRI, IIT Delhi, and the agricultural sector. The discussion covered the primary sources of air pollution in India and potential technological and policy solutions.
- 3. State of Air Quality and National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) in India**
 - o **Dr. Prashant Gargava, Director, National Clean Air Programme, MoEFCC, GoI and UNEP representatives (Valentin Foltescu and Sumit Sharma)** discussed the findings of the Air Quality Action Forum (AQAF) on Air Quality Management in India and the efforts being made by the Govt. of India under the National Clean Air Programme of India to improve air quality in the country.
- 4. Understanding Potential Project Ideas on Climate and Clean Air Mitigation**
 - o Moderated by **Dr. Shukla Pal Maitra, Director, Environment & Climate Action Group, NPC**, this session had industry representatives from various sectors, namely cement, iron and steel, pulp and paper, fertiliser, Chlor Alkali & chemicals. The focus was on identifying feasible projects for air pollution reduction and exploring the necessary infrastructure and technology interventions.
- 5. Engaging Corporate in Air Pollution and GHG Emission Mitigation**
 - o This panel discussion, moderated by **Mr. Tejinder Miglani**, featured corporate leaders from Varun Beverages Limited, Mahindra Group, and NASSCOM. The conversation revolved around how corporations can integrate environmental initiatives into their CSR programs and policy frameworks.
- 6. Perspectives on Solutions for Emissions from Agricultural Crop Residue Burning**
 - o Led by **Ms. Mikiko Tanaka, Director, UNESCAP**, this session explored sustainable farming practices and innovative solutions for managing agricultural wastes. Panellists included representatives from Punjab farmer unions and research institutions on bio-fuel initiatives.

7. **Data Matters – Atmospheric Environment Network**
 - This panel discussion, moderated by **Dr. Mukesh Sharma, IIT Kanpur** featured organisations from Japan who brought out the need for reliable data and the use of low-cost sensors (LCSs) for obtaining exhaustive data for effective monitoring of air quality.
8. **Unlocking Finance by Introducing Multiple Benefit Approaches**
 - Moderated by **Dr. Archana Walia, India Director, Clean Air Asia**, this session explored the financial aspects of clean air initiatives. Speakers from UNEP (Jihyun Lee), WHO (Enkhtsetseg Shinee), and other organizations discussed how to create an enabling environment for securing funding.
9. **Technology Solutions for Air Pollution and Climate Change**
 - **Ms. Yumi Yasuda, Deputy Director, Ministry of the Environment, Japan**, moderated this session which highlighted the technologies available and their application in South Asia. The emphasis has been on converting agro wastes into briquets as well as other sustainable products to prevent stubble burning.
10. **Donor landscape for addressing Air Pollution**
 - The session moderated by **Mr. Vikas Arora, Chief Investment Officer, Asian Venture Philanthropy Network (AVPN)** was attended by representatives from Impact Investors Council, Desai & Associates and Vital Strategies which focussed on donor funding available to provide innovative financing solutions to tackle climate change issues. Financing for air pollution control is however insufficient.
11. **Low Carbon Earth – Clean Air Innovation through Green Startups**
 - This session Moderated by **Vasudha Madhavan, Founder CEO, Ostara Advisors** went into details of Technological solutions and Investment opportunities for reducing air pollution as well as mitigating GHG emissions. Various successful startup founders and senior executives working towards decarbonisation participated in the discussions.
12. **Startups working on Air Pollution control systems**
 - Startups such as Strawcture, Dharaksha, ActiveBuildings&GNG Agritech& Waste Management Private Limited, which are actively involved in developing air pollution control solutions, showcased their products/technologies during this session.

Conclusion

The workshop concluded with closing remarks by **Ms. Mihoko Nagai, First Secretary, Embassy of Japan to India**, **Mr. Shombi Sharp, UN Resident Coordinator for India**, **Mr. K D Bhardwaj, Group Head & Director (Environment& Climate Change, NPC)**. They reiterated the importance of collaborative efforts in tackling air pollution and emphasized the need for sustained investment in clean air solutions.

This workshop marked a significant step towards mobilizing resources and fostering partnerships to combat air pollution in India. By aligning climate finance with air quality goals, India can make substantial progress in achieving a healthier and more sustainable environment for its citizens.