

For most policymakers, alleviating poverty, securing energy supplies, and reducing environmental pollution take priority over mitigating greenhouse gases (GHGs). Yet as awareness of climate change grows, an approach that meets immediate development needs while addressing longer term climate concerns has garnered more attention. This “co-benefits approach” cannot only lead to quicker and more cost-effective GHG mitigation but bring carbon finance to development needs.

## Launching of the ACP

In recent years, a growing number of international organizations have promoted a co-benefits approach and some countries in Asia have initiated co-benefits projects. However, the lack of a mechanism to share information and facilitate dialogue on these issues has limited the integration of co-benefits into sectoral planning and development policies in Asia.

In November 2010, the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) in collaboration with several Asian government agencies and international organizations launched [the Asian Co-benefits Partnership \(ACP\)](#). The ACP was created as an informal and interactive platform to facilitate information sharing and stakeholder cooperation on co-benefits in Asia. IGES serves as the secretariat.

The ultimate goal of the ACP is to support the mainstreaming of co-benefits into sectoral development plans, policies and projects in Asia via:

- ✓ Information sharing and knowledge management
- ✓ Enhancing communication among ACP members
- ✓ Developing co-benefits policies and projects in Asia
- ✓ Strengthening regional cooperation to promote co-benefits approach

ACP members consist of various stakeholders working on co-benefits in Asia, including government agencies, international organizations, academe, civil society and the private sector. Initial members of the advisory group including Asian country representatives from China, Indonesia, Japan, Thailand, as well as international organizations such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Clean Air Initiative for Asian Cities (CAI-Asia), the Global Atmospheric Pollution Forum (GAPF), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

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## A Co-benefits Approach: realigning climate change and sustainable development goals

### *Is climate change helping or distracting the realization of sustainable development goals?*

Tackling climate change and sustainable development are not competing goals. However, differing priorities among developed and developing countries often lead policymakers to view them as distinct and separate. This is unfortunate. While developing countries should indeed prioritize economic development by enhancing human security, energy security, or food security, they will also have to take into account that climate change is a stress multiplier. Measures ignoring the potential impacts of climate change could therefore be counterproductive.

### *Why choose one when we can do more?*

The co-benefits approach aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, prevent environmental pollution, and support sustainable development all at the same time. To be effective, developmental as well as climate co-benefits should be explicitly integrated into project planning or policymaking process and not just an afterthought. By recognizing co-benefits, short-term local benefits could be ensured as well as support of local stakeholders. Realigning climate change and sustainable development goals holds the key to the sustainable, low carbon future.

## Co-benefits Approach: *Beyond Reducing Emissions In the Transport Sector*



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Demand for transport infrastructure and services are likely to increase in developing countries, especially countries in Asia. Along with this growth, externalities are also expected to multiply. For instance, traffic congestion in some Asian countries is projected to cost as much as 3% of annual gross domestic product (GDP). The implications of Asia's rapid motorization are not limited to Asia, however. Globally, the transport sector emits 23% of energy-related carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions as it consumes almost two-thirds of global oil consumption. Road transport is the dominant source, with cars accounting for almost half of domestic transport emissions. Indeed, heavy motorization is not a feasible solution to Asia's fast growing transport demands. Rather the region needs sustainable, low carbon transport systems. But policymakers in Asia face a serious dilemma in meeting this need— how to improve mobility, accessibility, energy security, road safety, and air quality while reducing fossil fuel consumption thereby mitigating greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions?



The motivation for mainstreaming a transport co-benefits approach is to find solutions to both current local developmental problems (e.g. congestion, air pollution, road safety, etc.) and future global consequence (climate change) by integrating multiple co-benefits into project planning. As transport projects and policies are not created equal, quantifying co-benefits can improve decision making and lead to a departure for business-as-usual planning. This was the motivation behind publishing [the Transport Co-benefits Guidelines \(TCG\)](#) and [the Transport Co-benefit Calculator](#). The TCG provides initial values based on current available data. It also helps to clarify the steps in estimating reductions in CO<sub>2</sub> and conventional air pollutants as well as time savings, vehicle operating costs savings and road safety benefits from accident reduction.

By offering easy-to-follow instructions for quantifying co-benefits, the TCG aim to help diverse stakeholders - policymakers, private practitioners and specialists in the transport, climate, air pollution and urban planning sectors as well as related funding institutions – to recognise co-benefits and prioritize sustainable, low carbon transport in Asia.

 **Publications**

- ACP Fact sheets:
  - **No.1 What are co-benefits?**
  - **No.2 COP16 and co-benefits**
  - **No.3 Make co-benefits work: The case of China**
- **Transport Co-benefits Guidelines (TCG) and Transport Co-benefit Calculator**
- **Practical guide for improved organic waste management: climate benefits through the 3Rs in developing Asian countries**

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 **Activities**

- **2<sup>nd</sup> Advisory Group Meeting**  
(July 2011, Yokohama, Japan)
- **UNU-IAS-IGES-ACP Joint Meeting: Greening Growth in Asia: Making Co-benefits Mainstream** (July 2011, Yokohama, Japan)
- **1<sup>st</sup> Advisory Group Meeting**  
(July 2011, Kitakyushu, Japan)
- **Launching the Asian Co-benefits Partnership at the Better Air Quality (BAQ) 2010** (November 2010, Singapore)