



Cleaning the air: multi-level action for change

Air quality is a key challenge globally and in India. Air pollution has detrimental impacts on economic prosperity, health, and quality of life. Globally, more than 80% of city dwellers are exposed to air that is severely polluted. In India, more than 75% of Indian cities have air that does not meet Indian standards on air quality. Many Indian cities suffer from high concentrations of particulate matter, which presents a major challenge, also because of its significant impacts on human health. Among the economic impacts of air pollution, agricultural productivity in India also suffers due to high ground-level ozone concentrations.

Although there have been some efforts¹ to address air pollution in India over the last twenty years, the air quality challenge has continued to rise in the context of rapid urbanization and industrialization. The recently launched National Clean Air Program presents the first major national-level policy effort to address air pollution in India. This is especially important in the Indian context, as broader regional pollution sources also contribute towards air pollution in cities.²

Bloomberg Philanthropies and TERI (The Energy and Resources Institute) are joining together in a new partnership with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) to offer technical assistance on the National Clean Air Program. Together with the Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation (SSEF), Asian Development Research Institute (ADRI (CEECC)), Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP), and World Resources Institute (WRI India, support will also be offered to a group of cities (and associated states and state pollution control boards) on air quality issues.

The project, which is being launched during the World Sustainable Development Summit 2019, seeks to help address air pollution at multiple levels. At the national level, it aims to help build understanding of the sources of air pollution through emission inventories, and by bringing together experts and stakeholders on air quality issues to develop policy recommendations. At the city-level, the project aims to develop an understanding of the local sources of air pollution and help develop city level action plans based on source apportionment studies. Through these strands of work, the project will also help develop

¹For example, in 2006-07, plans were formulated for seventeen hotspot cities that were not meeting national ambient air quality standards. Source apportionment studies for six cities (Delhi, Bangalore, Kanpur, Chennai and Mumbai) were carried out in 2011. For Delhi, a clean air action plan and graded response action plan have been formulated.

²For example, in a recent source apportionment study on Delhi (TERI & ARAI, 2018), the average contributions of PM 2.5 from within the city was found to be 36% in winter and 26% in summer, and the rest came from sources outside the city.

understanding and awareness of air pollution issues and increase capacities of stakeholders to address the air pollution challenge.

A thematic event will be held on 11th Feb (4.00 pm – 5.50 pm) during the World Sustainable Development Summit organized by TERI, 11-13th February 2019 with the following objectives:

1. Understand the issue of air pollution in India: What are the factors contributing to the problem of air pollution in India?
2. Discuss potential solutions to the air pollution challenge: What are the key strategies that can work in reducing pollution levels at the national, regional and city level?
3. Learn lessons from international experiences: What lessons can be learned from past international experiences of reducing air pollution through national efforts? What lessons can be learned from past experiences of reducing air pollution in cities?