

About SCF

SEI Asia, with support from the Swedish government (SIDA), launched the Strategic Collaborative Fund Phase 2 (SCF2) programme in 2018 to enhance the current 2030 Agenda efforts in Asia and the Pacific. SCF2 aims to foster regional cooperation and policy dialogue for sustainable development and environmental sustainability, through capacity building, knowledge sharing and increased collaboration.

Human rights and gender equality are central to SCF2, as it champions regional and inter-regional collaboration for transboundary environmental policy development.

Learn more about the programme [here](#).

Theme

Addressing air pollution and climate change

Specific focus/priority

The regional collaboration event will focus on opportunities and policy pathways to address air pollution and climate change mitigation in parallel, on a regional scale in Asia.

Rationale

Air pollution and climate change are dual, interconnected threats to the health and livelihoods of Asians. The region's population is now predominantly urban, which concentrates both air pollution and climate change risk. One third of the world's air pollution-related deaths occur in the Asia-Pacific region¹, while the region is already experiencing the effects of climate change through more frequent and intense extreme weather, accounting for 42% of the region's total deaths from disasters in 2018².

¹ <https://www.who.int/westernpacific/news/detail/02-05-2018-one-third-of-global-air-pollution-deaths-in-asia-pacific>

² UNESCAP, 2019. Summary of the Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2018.

Yet action to address these challenges has been sluggish, with lowest income populations often bearing the brunt of their effects, thereby further deepening inequalities. For example, many Asian countries still lack clean air regulations, such as bans on open burning of waste or agricultural burning or are lagging in the implementation of cleaner fuel standards for vehicles. They also host industrial manufacturing of goods for high-income economies, without necessarily meeting the green production standards that would be required in those countries.

The large-scale production of consumer goods can contribute to global climate change through carbon dioxide and air pollutant emissions.

Who is most affected?

Certain population groups are disproportionately affected by the effects of air pollution and climate change due to underlying drivers of vulnerability. Outdoor workers, ranging from street vendors to construction workers, lack adequate protective equipment against air pollution; those operating in the informal economy may not have access to health care or social welfare in the event that their health deteriorates due to poor air or climate-induced ill-health. They may also not have any insurance to protect against potential damage to their housing or assets caused by a changing climate.

Furthermore, as the domestic caring burden falls largely on women, the female population bear the economic and social impacts of having to care for relatives who suffer ill health due to poor air quality, heat stress or vector-borne diseases. In countries where domestic use of solid fuels remains common, women are most exposed to indoor air pollution.

In addition, women are often expected to perform domestic chores such as gathering clean water and maintaining the home, which can be difficult and time-consuming when affected by drought, floods or other climate extremes. The time spent doing these domestic activities negatively affects their income-earning potential.

The elderly, persons with disabilities, and children, are also particularly vulnerable to both indoor air pollution and health-related climate impacts such as heat stress or vector-borne diseases.

How can we address the gaps?

Addressing air pollution and climate change alongside each other can produce both immediate, local as well as long-term, global benefits. Burning fossil fuels releases greenhouse gases and air pollutants, including short-lived climate pollutants (SLCPs) like black carbon, a component of particulate matter (PM), which is a leading environmental cause of ill health. Yet air pollution and climate change are typically thought of as separate. In policy and administration, different government agencies

generally have responsibility for each topic, creating a lost opportunity for integrated approaches that tackle both concurrently.

For example, the 2018 report entitled “[Air Pollution in Asia and the Pacific: Science-based solutions](#)” highlighted the benefits of integrating climate change mitigation with air quality management. The report identified 25 solutions that could help 1 billion people in the Asia Pacific enjoy clean air, while reducing carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions in 2030 by almost 20% relative to baseline projections.

There is a need to more consistently consider air pollution and climate change mitigation alongside each other, in policy and implementation of solutions that integrate gender equality, human rights and social equity into all approaches.

Addressing the dual issues of air pollution and climate change is directly relevant to the following SDGS goals and targets:

- **Goal 3** on good health and wellbeing, specifically 3.9 to reduce death and illness from pollution
- **Goal 11** for sustainable cities and communities, specifically 11.6 to reduce the environmental impact of cities and 11.2 for affordable, safe and green transport for all
- **Goal 13** on climate action, especially 13.2 to integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning.

Additionally, the issue is also directly relevant to the human rights to health and life, as well as rights to food and safe drinking water.

Regional Strategic Collaboration

We invite proposals for a regional event that will consider inclusive pathways for combined efforts towards clean air and climate change policies in Asia. The event should include a variety of different stakeholders in the climate change and air pollution sectors, and should foster collaboration and engagement across these two sectors, as well as related sectors such as public health.

The event focus should be on a regional scale (South East Asia), not just a single country, and should identify pathways for regional collaboration and policy actions to tackle the dual challenge and improve livelihoods. Areas of focus can include:

- policy measures to operationalise the solutions identified in the 25 Solutions report, while also integrating gender, human rights and social equity considerations
- action to be taken on short-lived climate pollutants which consider gender, human rights and social equity impacts
- key stakeholders and policy actors for regional partnerships combatting air pollution and climate change
- ways of supporting the implementation of the ASEAN roadmap on transboundary haze
- policies that influence and nudge behaviour among polluters, beyond regulation and standards, e.g., market-based solutions, incentives, certification, taxation and duties, social marketing, etc.
- all the above could integrate lesson-sharing and cooperation from successes in certain countries.

The event can build on ongoing initiatives and good practices to identify ways of scaling up on a regional basis whilst integrating gender, human rights and social equity. The outcomes of the event should feed into larger policy processes and frameworks at country and regional scales (i.e. engaging with regional organisations like ASEAN or international coalitions of organisations and countries working on climate change and/or clean air). It should build upon outcomes of regional events like the Asia Pacific Climate Week 2021, and feed into international events like the COP 26.

Expected results

We invite proposals for a regional event that will consider inclusive pathways for combined efforts towards clean air and climate change policies in Asia. The event should include a variety of different stakeholders in the climate change and air pollution sectors and should foster collaboration and engagement across these two sectors, as well as related sectors such as public health.

Theory of change			
Outputs	A regional-scale event with multiple stakeholders (can also include preliminary/side events)	A report outlining the outcomes of the event	A general communications product about the event
Outcomes	A regional network of stakeholders sharing common goal of clean air and climate mitigation is fostered	A clear pathway for joint action is identified with policy entry points at different scales (local, national, regional, international)	Considerations of gender, social equity and human rights are strengthened in policies, strategies, plans, laws and processes pertaining to clean air and climate mitigations.
Impacts	Event outcomes feed into regional and/or international policy processes related to air quality and climate change	Event outcomes feed into inclusive national and/or local processes and initiatives to combat air quality and climate change	Gender equality, social equity and human rights are integrated into discourses of air pollution and climate change

Theme-specific criteria

The event proposal should meet the following criteria:

1. **Equitable and inclusive solutions to climate change and air quality:** The event should clearly highlight the interlinkages between action on climate change and on air pollution, and identify clear pathways for multistakeholder action. It should ensure that gender, equity and human rights are cross-cutting themes at the centre of the agenda. The event will demonstrate solutions, innovations and good practices for addressing climate change and air pollution in ways that are also inclusive and equitable.
2. **Multi-stakeholder engagement:** The event format should allow meaningful participation of a diverse array of stakeholders, such as population groups particularly exposed to pollution, researchers, NGOs and civil society groups, business sector and government representatives. It should also highlight how local partners have been involved in the event design process.
3. **Clear directions for policy influence:** The event should have a clear pathway towards policy influence and policy outcomes (i.e. feeding into a larger regional or global platform for action). It can also identify initiatives and partnership programs that demonstrate good practices in managing air pollution and climate change, with consideration for gender, social equity and human rights implications, at a local scale.
4. **Integrated and context-specific approaches:** The event should consider air pollution and climate change action in an integrated approach, exploring opportunities to address other SDG priorities in parallel, bearing in mind the particular needs of Asian countries and their policy environments.