

Press release

Pakistan's clean air policies lack mechanisms to curtail hazardous air pollution levels – CREA analysis

ISLAMABAD, 1 December 2023 – In March 2023, Pakistan introduced the National Clean Air Policy (NCAP) and followed up with the Punjab Clean Air Plan (PbCAP) in April. Upon review, however, various shortcomings in both policies are apparent, underscoring the need for more robust and comprehensive measures.

The Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) has comprehensively reviewed Pakistan's efforts to combat deteriorating air quality. The analysis of Pakistan's National Clean Air Policy (NCAP) and Punjab Clean Air Plan (PbCAP) sheds light on the inadequacies of current policies and regulations in effectively addressing hazardous air pollution levels.

While recognising positive aspects such as revised emission standards and the prioritisation of emission inventories, the CREA review highlights critical deficiencies. Although the NCAP acknowledges the need to revise emission standards for industries, restrict industrial establishments within cities, decarbonise the power sector, and establish an emission inventory, it falls short in reducing ambient air quality concentration standards and instead proposes relaxation, neglects an emission load reduction based approach, limited emphasis on transboundary pollution, and lacks legal backing.

"The creation of a national clean air policy should serve as a foundation for targeted and evidence-based initiatives," said Sunil Dahiya, South Asia Analyst at CREA. "It should incorporate key learnings from efficient global policies, with a dynamic approach to continually evolve and improve."

Dawar Butt, Researcher at CREA, emphasised, *"in the absence of sectoral emission load reduction targets for cities and larger air-shed, there is no effective direction and goal for respective authorities to reduce air pollution levels."* He further explained, *"the policies need to comprehensively cater to the major polluting sectors, such as transport, industry and power sector, given that we have seen untargeted administrative restrictions imposed in parts of Punjab did not yield any significant improvement, which can only be achieved by setting medium-to-long term sectoral emissions load targets at the city or region level."*



To address the gaps in the NCAP, CREA emphasises the importance of enhancing ambient air quality monitoring across cities and rural areas. The organisation also recommends tightening ambient air quality guidelines and adopting an emission load reduction-based approach with ambitious targets for key polluting sectors, cities, and provinces. Additionally, CREA urges the development of regional, provincial, and national clean air action plans based on an air-shed pollution reduction approach.

Furthermore, emission standards for the industry sector must be tightened, coupled with enhanced reporting, transparency, and accountability on air quality data and action plans. CREA advocates for a legal framework to strengthen the policies, emphasising the need for clear directions and a framework for provincial environmental protection agencies (EPAs) to establish regional and city-level clean air action plans.

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Note(s) to editors

The CREA publication related to the press release can be found [here](#).

All CREA publications can be found [here](#).

About CREA

The Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) is an independent research organisation focused on revealing the trends, causes, and health impacts, as well as the solutions, to air pollution. CREA was founded in December 2019 in Helsinki and has staff in several Asian and European countries. The organisation's work is funded through philanthropic grants and revenue from commissioned research.

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