



Institutional Challenges for Air Quality Management

Charles M. Melhuish
Cornie Huizenga
Asian Development Bank

Better Air Quality 2002
Hong Kong, 16-18 December,
2002

Air pollution

A new problem without an institutional fit

- Does not fit well within the traditional –sector oriented- government structure
- Overall responsibility AQM rests with department of environment, yet it involves several sector departments
- Challenge is to induce change across a large group of organizations and individuals
- Requires short term investments in capacity development for medium to long term gains
- Most countries in Asia are still grappling to come to terms with developing appropriate institutional structure and capacity to effectively tackle air pollution



Air Pollution

Predominantly not a technical problem

- Technical solutions exist which can greatly reduce most of the emissions from mobile, area, and stationary sources
- Reasons why these technical solutions are not implemented is a combination of economic, policy, cultural and institutional factors



Better air Quality 2002, Hong Kong, 16-18 December 2002

Economics of Air Pollution

Need for a new paradigm

- Air pollution has significant costs to government, private sector and households but so far this is largely not included in economic decision making in most of Asia
- Several existing technical solutions have potential to reduce pollution and save money
- Ignoring costs and possible benefits hampers the development of an appropriate institutional response capacity and the willingness of government and private sector to take substantive action



Better air Quality 2002, Hong Kong, 16-18 December 2002

Implementing Technical Solutions

The need for sector transformation and reform

- Organization of transport sector in many cities and countries in Asia makes it difficult to introduce proven technical solutions (regulated pricing, limited integration in formal economy, low technological standards)
- Implementation of proven solutions requires substantive changes in the manner in which the sector is organized and functions
- Sector transformation requires leadership and governance, often absent at city level



Better air Quality 2002, Hong Kong, 16-18 December 2002

Managing Air Quality

The need for effective linkages

- AQM requires strong linkages between government departments, as well as between national and local government, and also between government and private sector
- In many countries in Asia such linkages are traditionally weak and it is doubtful whether such linkages can be established only for AQM
- Jury is still out on whether to create special body to manage air quality (governing board), or have separate environment authority



Better air Quality 2002, Hong Kong, 16-18 December 2002

AQM

Reflection on overall quality of Governance

- If there are structural problems with quality of governance, (eg. not performance based, corruption, reactive instead of proactive) it is likely that AQM will also be subjected to these problems
- Strengthening AQM will require overall strengthening of governance
- On interim basis it is sometimes possible to draw up specific agreements between institutional stakeholders to bypass problems



Better air Quality 2002, Hong Kong, 16-18 December 2002

Capacity for AQM

Provide the tools to do the work

- Asian Countries and Cities increasingly adopt concepts for AQM from USA, Europe and other parts of the world
- In doing so they do NOT provide the same capacity as was put in place in those places where AQM concepts are copied from
- By not providing adequate capacity AQM policies and concepts are high risk and likely to fail



Better air Quality 2002, Hong Kong, 16-18 December 2002

Effective AQM in Asia

A need for stronger NGOs

- AQM in USA and Europe has evolved partly due to strong pressure from NGOs, civil society at large and other pressure groups (e.g. academe)
- Capacity development in government was accompanied by increased knowledge in civil society and professionalization of NGOs
- In Asia capacity development of NGOs has been weak, in some cases even weaker than that of governments
- Role of NGOs needs to be acknowledged and followed up by capacity development



Better air Quality 2002, Hong Kong, 16-18 December 2002

Making AQM work

Involve the private sector

- Private sector needs to be convinced of the need to act – through combination of market forces, legislation and social awareness
- Private sector needs to generate capacity in the form of knowledge but needs to invest in technology that reduces pollution
- Private sector requires government policies and actions that are predictable, transparent and accountable



Better air Quality 2002, Hong Kong, 16-18 December 2002

AQM requires enforcement

enforcement culture

- AQM is based on setting standards which need to be met by polluters and enforcement is required to ensure compliance with standards
- Many Asian countries do not have a culture of strict enforcement of Laws and Standards. This makes it difficult to ensure that AQM standards will be well enforced



Better air Quality 2002, Hong Kong, 16-18 December 2002

Institutional Arrangements for AQM

the way forward

- Political Will required
- Structure needs to be established which defines overall responsibility for AQM versus responsibility for individual sources of pollution
- Responsibilities of national versus local government to be defined
- Capacity and resources to make structure work
- **Even the best structure will require champions to make it work**

