

Press Release

Climate Protection and Clean Air: An Integrated Approach

Potsdam, 18.09.2019. From 23 – 25 September 2019, heads of government from around the world will convene at the United Nations' General Assembly to discuss efforts to advance climate action and global sustainable development. The summit aims to boost national ambitions to achieve the objectives of the Paris Agreement and will review the implementation of measures relating to the Sustainable Development Goals. The relationship between air pollution and climate change plays an important role in this context, and is the subject of a [new IASS Policy Brief](#) titled "A Practical Approach to Integrating Climate and Air Quality Policy".

Air pollution and the climate crisis are closely related. As well as driving climate change, the main cause of CO₂ emissions – the extraction and burning of fossil fuels – is also a major source of air pollutants. An integrated approach to these two issues offers opportunities to maximise synergies, minimise trade-offs and increase efficiency. However, most policy decisions around climate action and air quality are still taken in parallel and with only limited coordination. In this latest IASS Policy Brief, the authors explain what the adoption of an integrated approach to these two issues would entail in practice and make an important contribution to the discussion on the implementation of the United Nations' climate and sustainable development goals.

The IASS Policy Brief draws on case studies to underpin its three key recommendations:

Recommendation 1: Involve crucial stakeholders early and regularly throughout the process. An inclusive vision that encompasses climate, air quality, and other societal concerns will take a wide range of stakeholders into account. The involvement and ownership of these stakeholders is essential for the acceptance of policies and support for their implementation.

Recommendation 2: Assess emissions of greenhouse gases and air pollutants together, and consider multiple impacts simultaneously. Integrated policymaking on climate and air quality is made easier by using modelling tools that assess emissions of greenhouse gases and air pollutants in tandem in order to quantify multiple impacts, for example on climate, health, and crops.

Recommendation 3: Take advantage of existing legal frameworks and ongoing policy processes. Existing policy structures can be adapted in order to integrate mitigation efforts in the fields of climate change and air quality. One good example of this is the Gothenburg Protocol, an international agreement on air pollution, to which the climate pollutant black carbon has been added in a recent amendment.

Publication:

Mar, K. A., Unger, C. (2019): A Practical Approach to Integrating Climate and Air Quality Policy. - *IASS Policy Brief*, 2019, 5.

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.2312/iass.2019.025>



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The Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) conducts research with the goal of identifying, advancing, and guiding transformation processes towards sustainable societies in Germany and abroad. Its research practice is transdisciplinary, transformative, and co-creative. The IASS cooperates with partners in academia, policymaking, civil society, and the business community to understand sustainability challenges and generate potential solutions. A strong network of national and international partners supports the work of the institute. Among its central research topics are the energy transition, emerging technologies, climate change, air quality, systemic risks, governance and participation, and cultures of transformation. The IASS is funded by the research ministries of the Federal Government of Germany and the State of Brandenburg.

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