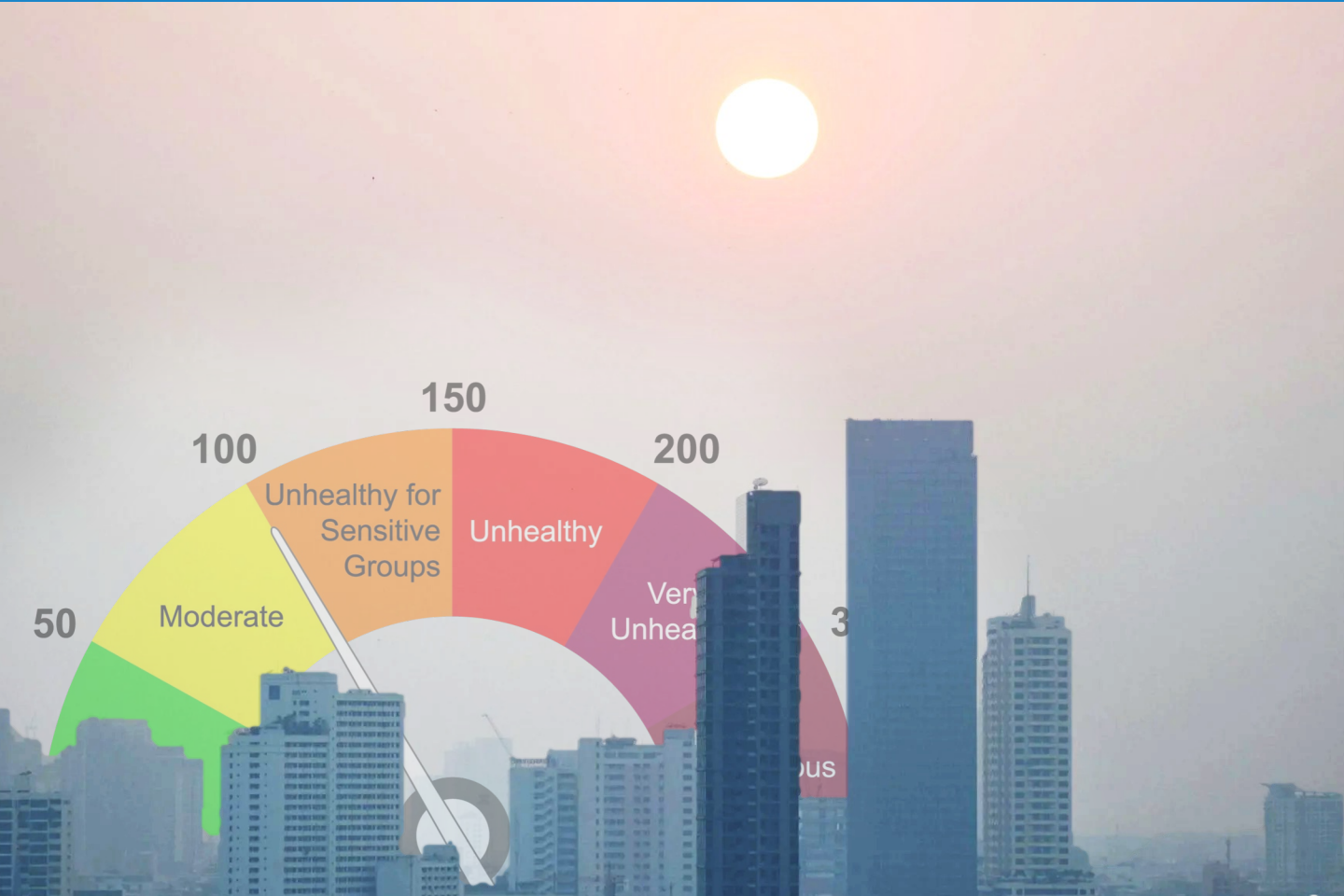


HTAPC Newsletter

Issue 14, March 2025



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Stay tune with more update



Accomplished Activities of Hub of Talents on Air Pollution and Climate (HTAPC)

Issue

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Participation in the 5th “Asia Pacific Clean Air Partnership (APCAP) Joint Forum”



On 20–21 March 2025, the Hub of Talents on Air Pollution and Climate (HTAPC), under the National Research Council of Thailand (NRCT), Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation (MHESI), participated in the 5th “Asia Pacific Clean Air Partnership (APCAP) Joint Forum.” The forum was organized under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and held at the Pacifico Yokohama Conference Center in Yokohama, Japan.

On 20 March 2025, **Dr. Supat Wangwongwatana**, Director of HTAPC, and **Dr. Vanisa Surapipith**, Deputy Director of HTAPC, attended the session titled “Invest in Clean Air Now.” Discussions during the session focused on critical topics including the current situation of air quality in the region, progress tracking in air pollution reduction, and the exchange of strategies and innovations aimed at reducing emissions from high-impact sectors. Moreover, the forum provided an opportunity to plan future actions under APCAP, with the overarching goal of promoting regional and interregional cooperation to accelerate the advancement of clean air policies.

Subsequently, on 21 March 2025, **Dr. Supat Wangwongwatana** participated in a special session presenting ideas on interregional cooperation between Asia and Africa, titled “From Asia to Africa: Introduction of the African Clean Air Programme (ACAP).” This session, held under the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) framework through ACAP, brought together stakeholders from various African countries and took place at TKP Garden City PREMIUM. The discussion emphasized strategies for connecting air pollution mitigation efforts in Asia with those in Africa via the ACAP initiative, and highlighted the importance of knowledge transfer through South-South Cooperation. This meeting marked a significant step in leveraging Asia’s and Japan’s experiences in addressing air pollution to support African countries in their clean air endeavors.

Participation in the “2025 Asian Air Quality Management Program (AAQMaP) and Model for Clean Air for Blue Sky Asia (CABSA) Workshop”



On 25–26 March 2025, the Hub of Talents on Air Pollution and Climate (HTAPC) under the National Research Council of Thailand (NRCT), Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation (MHESI), participated in the “2025 Asian Air Quality Management Program (AAQMaP) and Model for Clean Air for Blue Sky Asia (CABSA) Workshop.” The workshop was organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea and supported by a research team from Incheon National University (INU), a member institution of the HTAPC network, along with representatives from Mongolia, Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Vietnam. The event took place at Conference Room 31, Thani Nopparat Building, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration 2, Bangkok, Thailand.

Dr. Supat Wangwongwatana, Director of HTAPC, attended the workshop to engage in discussions on air quality, air pollution management, and the development of integrated approaches. The meeting emphasized the application of advanced technologies and data-driven insights to inform decision-making processes, aiming to develop effective strategies and approaches for air quality management across the Asian region.



Should Thailand Align Its PM_{2.5} Ambient Air Quality Standards with the WHO Air Quality Guidelines?

In 2021, the World Health Organization (WHO) updated its Air Quality Guidelines (AQG) for the first time in 16 years, since the previous revision in 2005. The annual average PM_{2.5} concentration was tightened from 10 µg/m³ to 5 µg/m³, and the 24-hour average PM_{2.5} concentrations was adjusted from 25 µg/m³ to 15 µg/m³. In addition, a fourth level of interim targets was introduced, set at the same levels as the previous guidelines-10 µg/m³ (annual average) and 25 µg/m³ (24-hour average).

Table 1 AQG level and Interim targets for PM_{2.5} Based on the WHO Guidelines of 2005 and 2021

	Annual average PM _{2.5} Concentration (µg/m ³)		24-hour average PM _{2.5} Concentration (µg/m ³)	
	2005	2021	2005	2021
Interim Target 1	35	35	75	75
Interim Target 2	25	25	50	50
Interim Target 3	15	15	37.5	37.5
Interim Target 4	-	10	-	25
AQG	10	5	25	15

Thailand first established national ambient air quality standards for PM_{2.5} in 2010, setting the annual average standard at 25 µg/m³ and the 24-hour average at 50 µg/m³. These levels correspond to WHO’s Interim Target 2. These standards remained in place for 12 years until a revision in 2022, both the annual and 24-hour average PM_{2.5} standards being set at 37.5 µg/m³. The revised annual standard came into effect on July 9, 2022, and the 24-hour standard on June 1, 2023. These values align with WHO’s Interim Target 3.

At the beginning of 2025, a doctor proposed that Thailand’s national PM_{2.5} standards be further revised to match the WHO AQG values, to better protect public health. This proposal raises an important question: **Should countries set air quality standards to align with the WHO guidelines? The answer is not necessary.** It is important to distinguish between “guidelines” and “standards.” Guidelines are recommendations without legal force, while standards are legally binding limits set by national authorities, supported by legal frameworks. In the 2021 WHO AQG guidelines, the section on implementation emphasizes that while the guidelines serve to protect health, they should be considered as **ultimate goals**. Achieving these values in the short term is not feasible for many countries, especially those with high levels of air pollution. As such, the WHO recommends a stepwise approach—progressively moving through interim targets toward the final guideline values. This gradual improvement is viewed as a key indicator of enhanced public health outcomes.

Thus, countries are not expected to adopt WHO guideline values as national standards from the outset. They are encouraged to select interim targets that are appropriate to their technological capabilities, socio-economic conditions, and policy contexts. These targets are then adopted as legally enforceable standards. As air quality improves and it becomes technically and economically feasible to meet stricter thresholds, countries may revise their standards incrementally, moving toward the WHO guideline values over time. Thailand’s revision of its PM_{2.5} standards in 2022 follows this very approach, marking a step forward in the progressive realization of cleaner air and improved health for its citizens.

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Hub of Talents on Air Pollution and Climate (HTAPC)

We cordially invite you to join us

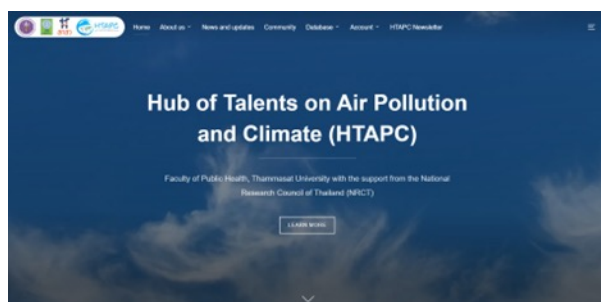
Hub of Talents on Air Pollution and Climate

HTAPC Membership Form for Experts



Official website of Hub of Talents on Air Pollution and Climate (HTAPC)

<https://www.htapc.info>



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Monthly Newsletter

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