

# ICAP: India's 'cool' new plan to combat rising temperatures

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(/Regional\_Fora/Regional\_Fora/Asia\_Pacific\_Forum/Publications.aspx)

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Climate change is for real – at least by now we all seem reasonably convinced it is. With rising global temperatures and the frequency of natural disasters, there is a growing need to address climate change through effective revision and mitigation measures. Of the many factors responsible for ozone depletion and global warming, refrigeration is a major one. More importantly, be it for the storage of medicine, food et cetera or keeping people cool and comfortable in hospitals, educational institutions, workplaces or homes, cooling is indispensable. The size of the global refrigerant market is expected to reach US\$30.37bn by 2025 at a compound annual growth of 5.3 per cent.<sup>[1]</sup> There is therefore a global need for efficient and effective cooling systems which would not only reduce the demand for refrigerants but would also reduce the cooling requirements for increasing populations. India, the second most populous nation on earth, with its tropical climate and pressing growth requirements has, in light of its global climate change commitments, taken the first step by implementing the India Cooling Action Plan (ICAP).

ICAP is meant to provide 'sustainable cooling and thermal comfort for all while securing environmental and socio-economic benefits for society. This will also help in reducing both direct and indirect emissions. ICAP provides an integrated vision towards cooling across sectors encompassing, inter alia, reduction of cooling demand, refrigerant transition, enhancing energy efficiency and better technology options with a 20-year time period.'<sup>[2]</sup>

The objectives of the ICAP are to:

- reduce cooling demand across all sectors by 20–25 per cent by 2037–2038;
- reduce refrigerant demand by 25–30 per cent by 2037–2038;
- reduce cooling energy requirements by 25–40 per cent by 2037–2038;
- recognise 'cooling and related areas' as a key area of research under the national science and technology programme; and
- train and accredit 100,000 servicing sector technicians by 2022–2023, combined with the Skill India Mission.

The Government of India believes the following benefits would accrue to society over and above the environmental benefits:

- thermal comfort for all – provision for cooling for economically weaker sections and lower income group housing;

- sustainable cooling – low greenhouse gas emissions related to cooling;
- doubling of farmers' income – better cold chain infrastructure, better value of farmers' produce, less waste;
- a greater skilled workforce – better livelihoods and environmental protection;
- 'Make in India' – domestic manufacturing of air-conditioning and related cooling equipment; and
- robust research and development on alternative cooling technologies – providing a push for innovation in the cooling sector.<sup>[3]</sup>

India has been one of the leading nations regarding global climate change action. As an acknowledgement, the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi received the United Nations Champion of Earth Award in 2018, together with French President Emmanuel Macron. India's commitment to renewable energy was a reason for this recognition. The country has already committed to phasing down its hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) by 85 per cent by 2045, as a part of its commitment under the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol. The ICAP is an initiative to honour such commitments. The National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency is already an integral part of India's decade-old National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC). The ICAP reiterates India's commitments to various Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as good health and wellbeing, sustainable cities and communities, climate action and others.

The ICAP would not just trigger research and innovation to promote cost-effective and improved cooling technologies but it would also ensure energy efficiency and behavioural changes in all stakeholders. Some programmes that would support ICAP are already in implementation. The super-efficient air-conditioner programme by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) which aims to improve energy efficiency by lowering cooling costs between 30–40 per cent is one such example. By improving energy efficiency it would also promote energy security and sustainability. New refrigerant standards and labelling requirements for appliances should be expected soon. Initiatives such as 'cool-roof programmes' and 'energy-smart buildings', which are already underway in various cities in India would greatly support ICAP.

ICAP is indeed a 'cool' plan which would help keep India cool and its people healthy, therefore positively affecting their work-efficiency and India's economic growth while keeping the impact on climate change to the minimum.

## Notes

**[1]** Report published by Grand View Research Inc, January 2018.

**[2]** Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Dr Harsh Vardhan at the launch of ICAP on 8 March 2019.

**[3]** MoEF&CC press release, 8 March 2019.

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