

COBENEFITS approach

Ensuring political ownership and relevance with *strategic co-benefit assessments*

IASS Potsdam, January 2018

Preface: COBENEFITS Mission and impact strategy

In collaboration with national knowledge partners, COBENEFITS elaborates country specific co-benefits of climate policies, with emphasis on the opportunities presented by renewable power generation. With its political partners in government departments and agencies COBENEFITS connects the social and economic opportunities of renewable energy to climate change mitigation strategies.

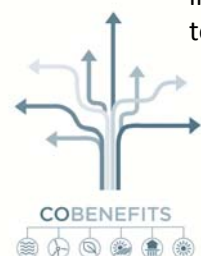
The impact strategy of the COBENEFITS project is based on building strong *political ownership* and buy-in of the key political stakeholders in the partner countries into the results of the co-benefit studies as well as on fostering relevance of and agency for their political implications, among these stakeholders. Consequently, the transformative rationale and theory of change of the COBENEFITS project and its *strategic co-benefit assessment* approach is building on the active contributions to and intense collaboration with political and knowledge partners.

In this regard *local implementation* and project co-design with key political partners (key stakeholders, responsible for shaping and implementing climate and energy related policies), addressing specific opportunities and interests of these groups can be considered as important conditions to ensure applicability, political buy-in and ownership of the outputs. This refers particularly to linking country-specific analyses on co-benefits to national NDC implementation.

1. Co-Benefits: Selection and Prioritization

With its co-benefit assessment studies, the COBENEFITS project explores how ambitious domestic renewable energy and climate change mitigation targets will be supportive of other social and economic performance targets of governments and ministries in the partner countries. Selecting and prioritizing co-benefits, as focus topics of subsequent co-benefits studies and capacity building activities, and connecting them to current interests and missions (key performance indicators) of the partner countries' governments (ministries, government departments) is one of the key phases in the COBENEFITS process.

By developing a shared understanding of the co-benefits approach and by prioritizing and specifying country-specific co-benefits, this phase provides the basis for suitable and applicable country specific assessments of co-benefits ("co-design of co-benefit studies"). By connecting opportunities with interests, the phase of co-benefits selection and prioritization also makes an important contribution to building an alliance for ambitious climate policy and action in the COBENEFITS partner countries.



To that end, the development process in the partner countries is based on a joint framework (see Table 1) that is adapted to national contexts (see COBENEFITS Inception Country reports). The overall objective is to specify a set of co-benefits focus topics that allows topic ownership among the key political stakeholders.

Table 1 Process of defining, prioritizing and specifying co-benefits in the partner countries

Process	Objective	Guiding question	Consultative body
Step 1	Clarifying political priorities of relevance to the broader political context of climate change mitigation with renewable energy	Which are the key performance indicators (KPI) of your Ministry (gov. department / unit) connected to electricity generation in your country?	COBENEFITS Council
Step 2	Connecting possible opportunities of climate change mitigation with renewable energy to political priorities	Which could be potential contributions (“co-benefits”) of renewable electricity generation to the (respective) key performance indicators?	COBENEFITS Council
Step 3	Prioritizing focus topics of co-benefits studies based on political leverage	For which of these potential co-benefits would you require additional knowledge / data to mobilize this co-benefit for meeting your KPI?	COBENEFITS Council
Follow up	Specifying focus topic of co-benefits studies based on domestic research capacities	How can the stated knowledge / data needs be tackled best based on the methodological skills of domestic research institutes / experts and the available financial and time resources of the project?	Research Capacity Assessment ¹

BOX 1 COBENEFITS Councils

The COBENEFITS Council is the main body for providing orientation and setting priorities for the co-benefit related activities in view of political relevance and impact of the project’s output.

In its work the COBENEFITS Council has a clear opportunity orientation, providing a common ground for collaboration across Ministries / Government Agencies and their particularly agendas. More specifically the COBENEFITS Council focuses on connecting social and economic opportunities (co-benefits) of renewable power generation with current political interest and drives the project work to connecting co-benefit studies with enabling policies (climate- and energy related roadmaps) and effective capacity building activities.

Given that inter-sectorial issues, such as the climate-energy-health nexus can only be successfully dealt with through inter-ministerial collaboration, the COBENEFITS Council provides an output-oriented forum for dialogue, mutual learning and a seedbed for joint action.

Its members represent the country’s governmental portfolios related to the development and implementation of climate and energy policies, as well as Ministries / Governmental Agencies potentially benefiting from social and economic co-benefits and as such potential supporters / enablers of an ambitious climate and renewable energy agenda (enabling political environment). Beside the climate and the energy policy departments, typically also economy, health, industry and finance departments are part of the COBENEFITS Councils.

The COBENEFITS Councils strive for continuity in their participants to building up a trustful, understanding and productive working environment. On the basis of current project needs and emerging opportunities the COBENEFITS Councils can be extended on a temporary or permanent basis by additional representatives or experts.

¹ See section 3

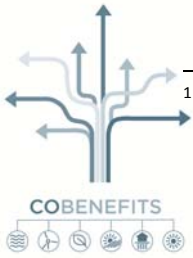




Figure 1 COBENEFITS Council Meeting (COBCON#1) Viet Nam, August 2017



Figure 2 COBENEFITS Council Meeting (COBCON#1) South Africa, May 2017



2. Reference Policy Scenarios (Climate and Energy)

The COBENEFITS project elaborates country specific co-benefits of climate policies, with emphasis on the opportunities presented by renewable power generation in the target countries. To this end COBENEFITS connects the social and economic opportunities of renewable energy to ambitious and timely climate change mitigation roadmaps.

For each target country a set of reference policy scenarios (RPS) has been compiled to provide a common basis for all co-benefit assessment studies in the respective country. These RPS have been selected and compiled based on four criteria:

1. Connecting power generation capacities (energy policy / roadmaps) with greenhouse gas emissions pathways (climate policy roadmaps), relevant for NDC implementation and re-formulation;
2. Connectivity and comparability with official climate and energy policies (existing or considered), strategies or roadmaps to ensure relevance of the resulting assessments;
3. Comparing an array of ambition levels in national climate and (renewable) energy policy to compare the socio-economic performance of high(er)-ambition NDC implementation and re-formulation;
4. Suitability as calculation basis for scientifically sound, quantitative assessments of socio-economic impacts.

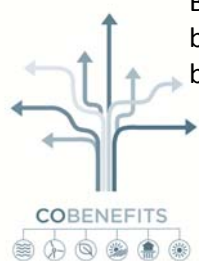
To meet these criteria to the best extent possible, adequate RPS in each target country have been (i) analysed and pre-selected jointly with the national *COBENEFITS Focal Points*, (ii) discussed and agreed with the *COBENEFITS Councils* (political stakeholders), based on (iii) prior consultation with *national experts and knowledge partners* from science and research.

This 3-step process also included the definition of the *time periods and reference years* for the RPS set in each country, based on the respective policy cycles and planning periods until the year 2050, with a focus on the shorter term effects (up to the year 2035).

3. Research Capacity and Needs Assessment

The research capacity and research needs in the partner countries have been systematically assessed to ensure the feasibility of the outlined co-benefits assessment studies, also reflecting the methodological skills and required human resources of domestic research institutes and experts. The Research Capacity and Needs Assessment provided an important basis for local implementation and knowledge co-production with national knowledge partners to base analyses on the best nationally available data sets and local institutional knowledge. Knowledge co-production will increase political ownership of the research output by linking the reputation, credibility, knowledge and experience of the IASS with the national reputation of knowledge partners, materializing also in terms of co-authorship in publications. This refers particularly to country specific analyses on co-benefits as well as related capacity building events with inputs from knowledge partners.

Based on a mapping of the national research landscapes, key research institutes and experts have been consulted in view of the selected co-benefits (cf. section 1). The format of consultation has been chosen with regards to the national context:



in South Africa and India interactive COBENEFITS research workshops with leading research organizations have been convened and accompanied by a series of bilateral consultations with research institutes and think tanks. In Viet Nam a pure approach of bilateral consultation visits at key institutions has proven to be successful (cf. Table 2 and Figure 3).

Table 2 COBENEFITS Research Capacity and Needs Assessment

Partner Country	Date	Format	Details
India	November 2017	COBENEFITS Research Workshop	Local host: TERI , see COBENEFITS Inception India report
South Africa	October 2017	COBENEFITS Research Workshop	Local host: CSIR, see COBENEFITS Inception South Africa report
Viet Nam	November 2017	Bilateral Consultation Meetings	Local organization: GreenID, see COBENEFITS Inception Viet Nam report



Figure 3 COBENEFITS Research Workshop South Africa, October 2017

Contact

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Annex

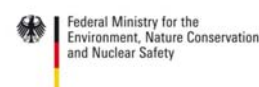
Table 3 COBENEFITS Stakeholder Groups: Definition, Profile, and Role

Key stakeholder	Primary Stakeholders
<p><i>Key political partners to assure a strong political ownership and relevance of the COBENEFITS project and its outputs throughout the project.</i></p>	<p><i>Further political partners to benefit from social and economic co-benefits of renewable electricity generation with the political or administrative power to push or impede more ambitious climate and renewable energy policies in the partner countries.</i></p>
<p>Profile:</p> <p>Government institutions (Ministries, Departments, Agencies) in the partner countries in charge of developing and implementing domestic climate and energy policies, such as Ministries / Government Departments of Environment, Energy, Economy, Industry.</p> <p>Main beneficiaries and addressees of the project and gatekeepers to more ambitious climate and renewable energy in the partner countries</p>	<p>Profile:</p> <p>Further Government institutions in the partner countries with agendas related to the social and economic co-benefits of renewable electricity generation in the partner countries, such as Ministries / Government Departments of rural development, health, social affairs, finance, labor, education, foreign affairs; subordinate agencies, responsible for implementing climate and energy policy on different political levels, as well as key legislative bodies (parliamentarian groups) to shape the political climate / energy agendas.</p>
<p>Roles in the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation in COBENEFITS Council, continuous contact • Joint definition of Co-Benefits Priorities based on the agendas of the government institution • Key contacts for Capacity Needs Assessment and WP on Enabling Environment • Key target group for training and outreach activities, possible contributors to specific training activities 	<p>Roles in the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be informed and consulted on the main stages of the project • To be consulted and involved in activities on specific co-benefits (e.g. health, rural electrification) when connected to the primary stakeholders' agenda, in view of training activities, roundtables on enabling political environments to seize specific co-benefits • Key target group for training and outreach activities, possible contributors to specific training activities
Secondary Stakeholders	Knowledge partners
<p><i>Representatives of the broader societal discourse on energy and climate policies in the partner countries as beneficiaries and multipliers of the findings on social and economic co-benefits of renewable electricity generation in the partner country to provide critical impulses / reflection to the project.</i></p>	<p><i>Organizations and individuals contributing to conceptualizing and conducting co-benefits assessment and training / capacity building activities. Beneficiaries of international mutual learning on assessment methodologies (research institutes, think tanks, international organizations, private consultancies / experts)</i></p>
<p>Profile:</p> <p>Societal and economic interest groups, political change agents and multipliers (media) of an energy transition in the partner countries to contribute to and benefit from the social and economic co-benefits of renewable electricity generation in the partner country, such as civil society groups, industry associations, finance institutes, and media representatives</p>	<p>Profile:</p> <p>Domestic and international organizations, active in the partner countries, developing and contributing with their expertise on climate and energy policies, potential co-benefits of renewable electricity generation, on enabling political environments and instruments to seize the co-benefits, as well as with their expertise on relevant (political and cultural) context knowledge to successfully implement the COBENEFITS project.</p>
<p>Roles in the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involved in policy roundtable (with broader society) on seizing the co-benefits through domestic politics to provide critical impulses out of the (mainstream political / administrative) box • Potential target group of (open) online training activities • To be informed / addressed on main outputs of the project • Key target group of (social) media outreach in the partner country 	<p>Roles in the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigators / researchers for conducting co-benefit assessment studies • Advisors to the project, participants and contributors of COBENEFITS research workshops • Participants and contributors of international COBENEFITS mutual learning sessions

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