



## Invest in green energy, imports, report urges

HK can cut carbon footprint 24pc at a cost of HK\$100b, study says

Cheung Chi-fai  
Mar 30, 2010



SHARE



Hong Kong could cut its carbon emissions by about a quarter through increased investments in clean energy and imports that might cost the city HK\$130 billion by 2030, according to a study by mainland academics.

However, the cost could be offset by HK\$30 billion in savings from improved energy efficiency in buildings, transport and consumer products and cheaper power generation.



The estimates are contained in a report, "A Low Carbon Vision for Hong Kong", by the Energy Research Institute, which was commissioned by the British-based Climate Group to conduct the study. The institute is under the National Development and Reform Commission.

Using a computer model developed by the institute, the study gauged the emissions-reduction potential of Hong Kong under different low-carbon scenarios and estimated the related monetary costs and benefits. It

advised Hong Kong to adopt an enhanced low-carbon approach that could deliver a cut of up to 24 per cent in absolute carbon emissions to 29.8 million tonnes by 2030, taking the level to below that in 1990. In 2007, the city emitted 46.7 million tonnes of carbon dioxide, of which 60 per cent was from power generation.

Such a reduction would, however, cost HK\$30 billion between now and 2020 and a total of HK\$130 billion by 2030. The costs would come in the form of investments in renewable-energy infrastructure, energy-efficient products and transport, imports of green power from the mainland and the introduction of biofuels.

While the extra investment might seem high, the study projected that energy expenditure would fall substantially in the long term because of lower energy demand from better efficiency. It estimated savings could reach HK\$30 billion by 2020.

Besides the monetary gains, the report noted the health benefits to be had from better air quality.

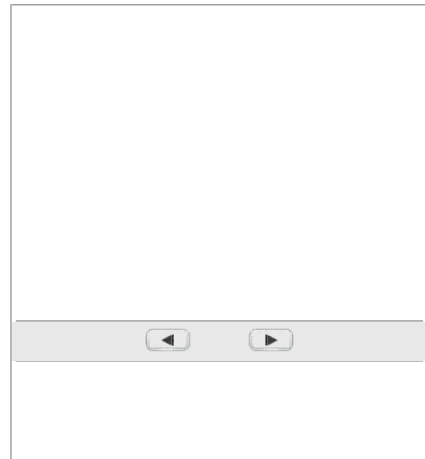
According to the report, imported electricity could meet about 11 per cent of the city's energy demands by 2030, more than double that in 2007. The amount of power produced by burning coal would halve, too.

The report also said that while the city was capable of outperforming the mainland's carbon intensity reduction target of 45 per cent below 2005 levels, it advocated an absolute target as it made more sense for a developed economy like Hong Kong.

"It is more desirable for Hong Kong to adopt an absolute target as it will become a role model for other mainland cities in the long term," said Jiang Kejun, the report's principal investigator and director of an energy research centre under the institute.

He said the target was within the city's reach and it had to be set out soon as a signal to the private sector to play its part.

Apart from enhancing energy efficiency in buildings and products, Jiang said the city should adjust the mix of fuel used to generate power by reducing coal burning, switching to more natural gas and generating more wind power.



### RELATED STORIES

(Last 7 Days)

1. HK can halve emission intensity, study finds
2. Carbon copy
3. HK's role limited, Yau says
4. Home-grown remedies
5. Carbon debate creates climate for China's civil society to grow

### RELATED ARCHIVES

1. Government feels heat as meeting turns spotlight on global warming
2. Investors waking up to rich potential of clean energy
3. Time running out for global environmental blueprint
4. Come clean on use of energy, say greens
5. How to check growth in emissions



It could also buy more electricity from Guangdong, thereby minimising the need for investment in power-generation facilities in the city. But that would require better grid integration.

Jiang said Hong Kong should increase green energy imports from Guangdong and develop renewable energy sources locally or across the border to help it move towards a low-carbon economy.

"Hong Kong can pay a higher price to import green power from western provinces channelled through the Guangdong power grid," said Jiang, who was in the city yesterday to brief local officials and business leaders on the report.

Apart from renewable energy, Jiang said the city could also consider nuclear power. CLP Power (SEHK: [0002](#)), the largest local electricity producer, has said it is interested in nuclear power development on the mainland. CLP already gets about a third of its power from Guangdong's Daya Bay nuclear power station. That accounts for a quarter of Hong Kong's annual power consumption.

Wu Changhua, the Greater China director of the Climate Group, said it was time the government brought stakeholders together to work on a carbon reduction blueprint.

The Environmental Protection Department is expected to release its climate change study later this year.

---

[RATE THIS STORY](#)

AVERAGE (3 VOTES)

[▲ TOP](#)