Session Proposal For IASTA, 2026

Preamble

Aerosol science and air pollution research provide the scientific foundation for understanding pollutant sources, atmospheric processes, exposure pathways, and health impacts. However, the core value of this research lies in its translation into effective air quality management. The journey from scientific evidence to cleaner air requires informed policies, technically robust city action plans, coordinated implementation by urban local bodies, and active participation of communities. One of the most important challenges in environmental research today is the successful synchronisation of science, policy and implementation for improvements in air quality, public health, and the quality of urban life.

Launched in 2019, the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) represents India's first coordinated, multi-level initiative to improve urban air quality through science-based planning and collaborative implementation across 130 cities of India. One of its most noteworthy feature has been the institutionalisation of partnerships between scientists, technical experts, Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), and policymakers through the National Knowledge Network (NKN), Institutes of Repute (IoRs), and the PRANA platform, enabling continuous technical support, monitoring, and accountability. Given the diversity and complexities of Indian cities, each with their unique mix of emission sources, governance structures, resource constraints, and socio-economic contexts, implementation of city action plan remains a challenging and dynamic process. Periodic assessment, sharing of field experiences, and evidence-based course correction are therefore essential for strengthening air quality management and achieving sustained improvements in environmental and public health outcomes.

Proposed Special Session

Towards Cleaner Air: Lessons from NCAP Cities

This special interactive round-table discussion is designed to facilitate the dialogue sharing experience among the three key stakeholders responsible for translating City Action Plans into measurable improvements in air quality:

- **Urban Local Bodies (Implementing Agencies)** directly responsible for planning and on-ground implementation of air quality interventions;
- **Institutes of Repute (IoRs)** providing scientific guidance, technical support, capacity building, and independent assessment; and
- **Civil Society Organisations/NGOs**, representing citizen perspectives and community participation.

Rather than focusing on broad policy discussions, the panellist of this session will share their practical experiences from planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of City Action Plans. The panellists will identify institutional, technical, governance, and community-level challenges, highlight successful practices and innovations, and discuss mechanisms for strengthening coordination, scientific support, accountability, documentation, and citizen engagement through a constructive exchange.

The objective is to foster an open and solution-oriented dialogue that captures lessons learned from NCAP cities and develops actionable recommendations for strengthening evidence-based, locally relevant, and adaptive air quality management across India.