

From the Ground: We thought we would cover issues from the ground having just attended the Beijing Forum, an international forum of academics, scientists and experts. The forum supported by of the Chinese Ministry of Education and the Beijing municipal government, had multiple panels on the environment this year. The key message: more "institutional reform". Debra Tan expands on whether this translates to more legislation & power to the Ministry of Environmental Protection and on "areas of confusion" in media and litigation that hamper the path to more enforcement. At the forum, China Water Risk talks about how water is shaping food & energy choices within the broader theme of "40 Years of Environmental Protection in China & the World". Solutions for agriculture & energy are critical. Syngenta's Dr. Sandhikar, tells us how to achieve big gains in water savings from small farms in India where there has been an explosion of small farmers and over-exploitation of groundwater. However, some solutions for energy whilst good for air, may be bad for water: WRI discusses why China's latest scheme to cut air pollution by replacing coal with synthetically derived gas could exacerbate water stress. Another area of concern raised at the forum is groundwater over-exploitation. Since we have already discussed this extensively in previous editions, we turn to subsidence, an unavoidable side-effect of excessive groundwater depletion. We review the extent of subsidence in China and what sinking lands mean for agriculture and infrastructure. Can this be solved? With 50 cities in China at risk of subsidence, what about real estate risk? Cracks in the ground are already showing up in Shanghai and other cities; will this only rise with greater urbanisation? It is clear that cleaning up pollution and putting in measures to mitigate subsidence risk will only raise the costs of doing business. All eyes are on the 3rd plenary session next week where the amendments to the environmental protection law, which propose to remove caps on pollution penalties and introduce daily fines, are expected to pass. With this in mind, Xin and Brown from SynTao expand on why we should take a closer look at the mishandling of toxic waste discharged by companies as they could well turn into toxic assets.



NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER

EDITORIAL

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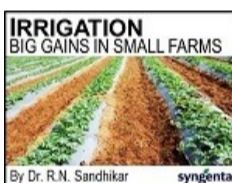
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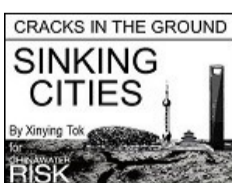
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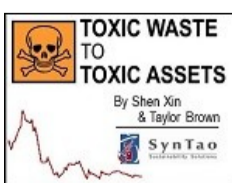
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- ADB: [Thinking About Water Differently: Managing the Water-Food-Energy Nexus](#)
- UNESCO: [Free Flow, Reaching Water Security Through Cooperation](#)
- UN Water: [UN-Water Annual Report 2012](#)
- CDP Water: [Global Water Report 2013](#); 70% of respondents now view water as a substantive business risk, up from 53% last year but key Chinese companies still not surveyed
- International Rivers: [Civil Society Guide to Healthy Rivers & Climate Resilience](#)

Interest:

- Tianjin: 440 companies closed in Tianjin due to pollution violations
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