Dynamic projection of anthropogenic emissions in China: methodology and 2015-2050 emission pathways under a range of socioeconomic, climate policy, and pollution control scenarios

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Abstract. Future trends in air pollution and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for China are of great concern to the community. A set of global scenarios regarding future socioeconomic and climate developments, combining shared socioeconomic pathways (SSPs) with climate forcing outcomes as described by the representative concentration pathways (RCPs), were created by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Chinese researchers have also developed various emission scenarios by considering detailed local environmental and climate policies. However, a comprehensive scenario set connecting SSP-RCP scenarios with local policies and representing dynamic emission changes under local policies is still missing.

In this work, to fill this gap, we developed a dynamic projection model, the Dynamic Projection model for Emissions in China (DPEC), to explore China's future anthropogenic emission pathways. The DPEC model is designed to integrate the energy system model, emission inventory model, dynamic projection model, and parameterized scheme of Chinese policies. The model contains two main modules, an energy-model-driven activity rate projection module and a sector-based emission projection module. The activity rate projection module provides the standardized and unified future energy scenarios after reorganizing and refining the outputs from the energy system model. Here we use a new China-focused version of the Global Change Assessment Model (GCAM-China) to project future energy demand and supply in China under different SSP-RCP scenarios at the provincial level. The emission projection module links a bottom-up emission inventory model, the Multi-resolution Emission Inventory for China (MEIC), to GCAM-China, and accurately tracks the evolution of future combustion/production technologies and control measures under different environmental policies. We developed technology-based turnover models for several key emitting sectors (e.g., coal-fired power plants, key industries, and on-road transportation

sectors), which can simulate the dynamic changes in the unit/vehicle fleet turnover process by tracking the lifespan of each unit/vehicle on an annual basis.

With the integrated modelling framework, we connected five SSP scenarios (SSP1-5), five RCP scenarios (RCP 8.5, 7.0, 6.0, 4.5, and 2.6), and three pollution control scenarios (business as usual (BAU), enhanced control policy (ECP), and best health effect (BHE)) to produce six combined emission scenarios. With those scenarios, we presented a wide range of China's future emissions to 2050 under different development and policy pathways. We found that, with a combination of strong low-carbon policy and air pollution control policy (i.e., SSP1-26-BHE scenario), emissions of major air pollutants (i.e., SO_2, NO_x, $PM_{2.5}$, and NMVOCs) in China will be reduced by 34-66% in 2030 and 58-87% in 2050 compared to 2015. End-of-pipe control measures are more effective for reducing air pollutant emissions before 2030, while low-carbon policy will play more important role for continuous emission reduction until 2050. On contrast, China's emissions will remain high level until 2050 under a reference scenario without active action (i.e., SSP3-70-BAU). Compared to similar scenarios set in the CMIP6 (Coupled Model Intercomparison Project Phase 6), our estimates of emission ranges are much lower than the estimates from the CMIP6 in 2020/2030, but their emission ranges become similar in the year 2050.

1 Introduction

The rapid development of China has led to severe air pollution due to the ever-increasing energy demand and lax environmental legislation over the past decades, which exerts negative influences on human health, climate, agriculture, and ecosystems (Xue et al., 2019; Zheng et al., 2019). In 2013, China implemented the Air Pollution Prevention and Control Action Plan (denoted as the Action Plan) to fight against air pollution (China State Council, 2013), and a series of active clean air policies for various sectors were taken in support of the Action Plan. Consequently, the emissions of major air pollutants have decreased, and the air quality has substantially improved since 2013 (Zheng et al., 2018; Cheng et al., 2019, Zhang et al., 2019). The national annual mean $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations decreased from 72 μg/m³ in 2013 to 43 μg/m³ in 2017 (Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE), 2014; MEE, 2018). However, the $PM_{2.5}$ concentration is still worse than China's air quality standard of 35 μg/m³ and the World Health Organization (WHO) $PM_{2.5}$ guideline value of 10 μg/m³ (WHO, 2006). In support of continuous air quality improvement, a series of policies, such as the Three-Year Action Plan for Winning the Blue Sky Defense Battle (the Three-Year Plan) promulgated in 2018 (China State Council, 2018), has been executed. Additionally, China is committed to low-carbon economic development to achieve its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) target and contribute to limiting global warming (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2015), which benefits substantial reductions in both air pollution and GHG emissions. Thus, future air pollution and GHG emission trends in China are of great concern to the community.

Future changes in energy and emissions in China are either projected separately or incorporated into Asia within global scenarios (Cofala et al., 2007; O'Neill et al., 2010; Amann et al., 2013; Rao et al., 2017; Gidden et al., 2019). Global scenarios,

such as the new generation of global scenarios combining shared socioeconomic pathways (SSPs) with climate forcing outcomes as described by the representative concentration pathways (RCPs), can reflect plausible future emissions based on

65 socioeconomic, environmental, and technological trends at the regional scale (Rao et al., 2017). However, there exist several challenges in using these global scenarios in China's case. First, due to the incomplete knowledge of China's local policies, current global scenarios lack detailed descriptions of national and local energy and pollution control policies. Second, by employing simple extrapolation to emission factors, future estimates from the global scenarios could not provide the complete evolution of future combustion/production technologies and emission control measures. Third, recent emissions in China have

70 changed dramatically as a consequence of clean air actions (Zheng et al., 2018), while historical emission data used in the global scenarios cannot easily capture the fast changes in emissions during recent years or over the next several years in China (Hoesly et al., 2018).

Previous studies have investigated future emission trends in China by considering detailed local policies (Wei et al., 2011; Xing et al., 2011; Zhao et al., 2013; Shi et al., 2016; Jiang et al., 2018; Li et al., 2019). These scenarios describe future emission

75 changes based on a set of scenarios that reflect China's economic growth, energy demand, up-to-date air quality and climate mitigation policies. However, most of these local scenarios are disconnected from global scenarios (e.g., SSP-RCP scenarios; Rao et al., 2017), and only a few scenarios are comparable with IPCC scenario sets (Jiang et al., 2018). Usually, these local scenarios do not consider the linkage between Chinese and global development pathways, and air pollutant and CO_2 emissions are investigated separately. In addition, these studies could not simulate the process of new technology entering the markets

80 due to a lack of technology-based projection models. The absence of public emissions data products makes further use difficult in climate and chemical transport models.

In this work, with the motivation to build a comprehensive scenario set that connects global scenarios considering local policies and representing dynamic emission changes with local policies and technology deployment, we developed a dynamic projection model for China's future anthropogenic emissions, named as the Dynamic Projection model for Emissions in China

85 (DPEC). The DPEC model is designed to track the dynamic changes in emissions, future combustion/production technologies and emission control measures. This model includes an energy-model-driven activity rate projection module and a sector-based emission projection module, which integrates the energy system model, emission inventory model, dynamic projection model, and parameterized scheme of Chinese policies. Based on the DPEC model, we created six emission scenarios by connecting five SSP scenarios (SSP1-5), five RCP scenarios (RCP 8.5, 7.0, 6.0, 4.5, and 2.6), and three pollution control

90 scenarios (business as usual (BAU), enhanced control policy (ECP), and best health effect (BHE)) to explore future emission pathways during 2015-2050. Finally, we compared our estimates with similar scenarios from the Coupled Model Intercomparison Project Phase 6 (CMIP6). In this work, the purposes of developing the DPEC model and creating a new set of Chinese scenarios are as follows: (1) connect with the IPCC scenario assembly; (2) synthetically consider region-specific and sector-based local policies; (3) develop technology-based turnover models for key emitting sectors to simulate the dynamic

95   changes in future technologies; and (4) provide a set of emission projection datasets to the community. The development of
this dynamic model and associated scenarios would help to identify win-win measures and pathways that provide multiple
benefits for the environment and climate and support the future's short and long-term synergizing actions on the environment
and climate for the Chinese government.

2 Dynamic Projection model for Emissions in China (DPEC)

100 **2.1 Model framework**

As shown in Figure 1, the DPEC model includes two main modules, an energy-model-driven activity rate projection module
and a sector-based emission projection module. The model integrates the energy system model, bottom-up emission inventory
model, dynamic projection model, and parameterized scheme of environmental standards and policies.

The energy-model-driven activity rate projection module is set up to produce standardized and unified future activity rates by
105 linking the energy system model with the emission inventory model. The DPEC model is developed starting with the bottom-
up framework of the Multi-resolution Emission Inventory for China (MEIC) model (available at www.meicmodel.org), which
also provides us with historical activity rates, technologies, and emissions information for each emitting source. MEIC uses a
technology-based methodology to calculate air pollutants and CO_2 emissions for more than 700 anthropogenic emitting sources
for China from 1990 to present, as described in detail in earlier papers (Zhang et al., 2009; Zheng et al., 2014; Liu et al., 2015;
110 Li et al., 2017; Zheng et al., 2018; Tong et al., 2018a). The China-focused version of the Global Change Assessment Model
(GCAM-China; see Sect. 2.2.1.) is adopted to provide future energy demand and supply in China under different
socioeconomic-energy scenarios at the provincial level. The linkage and harmonization of energy outputs is to fit the MEIC
source categories by reorganizing and refining the outputs from the GCAM-China (Sect. 2.2.2. and Sect. 2.2.3.).

The sector-based emission projection module is built to dynamically track the evolution of future combustion/production
115 technologies and control measures by parameterizing different environmental regulations and policies. Here emission sources
from the MEIC model are commonly classified into six sectors: power, industry, residential, transportation, solvent use, and
agriculture sectors (Sect. 2.3).

Future emissions from each emission source in each province are estimated as follows:

$$E_{i,j,k} = A_{i,j,k} \times \sum_m \left(X_{i,j,m} \times EF_{i,j,k,m} \times \sum_n \left(C_{i,j,m,n}(1 - \eta_{k,n}) \right) \right) \qquad (1)$$

where i represents the province, j represents the emission source, k represents the air pollutants or CO_2, m represents the
120 technologies for manufacturing, and n represents the technologies for air pollution control. The emission (E) is estimated by

the product of activity rate (A), technology distribution ratio (X), unabated emission factor (EF), penetration rate (C) and removal efficiency of a specific pollution control technology.

2.2 Energy model-driven activity rate projection module

2.2.1 The GCAM-China model

125   Future energy demand and supply is usually provided by integrated energy system models. Several energy system models, such as GCAM (Clarke et al., 2008; Collins et al., 2015; Clarke et al., 2018; http://www.globalchange.umd.edu/gcam/), Integrated Model to Assess the Global Environment (IMAGE; Alcamo et al., 1996; Braspenning Radu et al., 2016; https://models.pbl.nl/image/index.php/Welcome_to_IMAGE_3.0_Documentation), and Model of Energy Supply Systems And the General Environmental Impact (MESSAGE; Miketa et al., 2006; Zhang et al., 2019;
130   http://pure.iiasa.ac.at/id/eprint/1542/) are widely used by researchers and policy makers.

GCAM is a global partial equilibrium model with 32 energy-economy regions representing the behaviors and interactions among five systems: the energy system, water, agriculture and land use, economy, and climate. GCAM is stewarded by the Joint Global Change Research Institute (JGCRI) (GCAM, 2019, http://jgcri.github.io/gcam-doc/index.html), and more detailed documentation on GCAM can be found at http://www.globalchange.umd.edu/models/gcam/. Over time, GCAM is increasingly
135   used in climate (Zhou et al., 2013; Fawcett et al., 2015; Calvin et al., 2019; Shinha et al., 2019), energy (Belete et al., 2019; Silva Herran et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2019), land use (Dong et al., 2018; Turner et al., 2018; Vittorio et al., 2018) and modeling studies. In addition, GCAM also provides a number of scenarios and assessments for various organizations and reports, such as the Energy Modeling Forum (EMF), the U.S. Climate Change Technology Program, the U.S. Climate Change Science Program (Edmonds and Reilly, 1982; Edmonds and Reilly, 1983; Edmonds et al., 1984) and the IPCC assessment reports
140   (Reilly et al., 1987; Pachauri et al., 2014; Calvin et al., 2017). Most energy system models, including GCAM, take China as a whole section in simulations and fail to reflect the differences in regional or provincial energy and socioeconomic developments. To better explore the provincial evolution and development in China, JGCRI developed and expanded GCAM to include greater spatial detail in China's provinces, and this model is referred to as GCAM-China (Yu et al., 2019). In GCAM-China, the 31 provinces are operated as explicit regions within the global GCAM model. Energy transformation and end-use
145   demand processes are simulated at provincial levels. Therefore, we use GCAM-China (version 4.3) to project future energy demand and supply in China under different economic-energy scenarios at the provincial level.

2.2.2 Linkage between GCAM-China and MEIC emission model

To better illustrate the emission characteristics, emission models, such as the MEIC model, always have much more elaborate emission sources and fuel type categories than energy models. Here, we downscaled and disaggregated the GCAM-China
150   outputs and matched them to the MEIC framework (Table S1). The 227 fundamental emission categories in the MEIC model

are composed of intercombinations of seven major sectors (including power, heating, industry, residential, transportation, solvent use, and agriculture) and various fuels and productions (Table S1). Different technologies would further divide these emissions into 745 detailed sources; however, the evolution of technology distributions is simulated in the DPEC model. Therefore, the interaction data system mainly conducts sector mapping and fuel mapping to match the GCAM-China outputs

155   to the 227 MEIC categories. Except for the heating sector, all the linkage works were operated at the provincial level.

From the sector perspective, the energy and economic-related outputs from the GCAM-China or GCAM model can be divided into four parts: resource production (primary energy), energy transformation (electricity, heat, refining, and other energy transformation), final energy use (buildings, industry, and transportation), and socioeconomics (population and GDP). The power and heating sector in DPEC were linked from the energy transformation part in GCAM-China. The power sectors of

160   the two models have basically no gaps and can be directly matched. Due to the unavailability of provincial energy information in the heating sector in GCAM-China, we first matched the national heat outputs from the GCAM-China energy consumption sector to DPEC and then downscaled to the provincial level with district heat outputs. When downscaling, the heating industrial (to offer thermal energy) in the DPEC model is derived from industry district heat in the industry sector, and residential heating (refers to centralized heating) in the DPEC model is obtained from the commercial and residential urban district heat in the

165   building sector. The residential, industry combustion, and transportation sectors in DPEC are matched with the final energy-use parts in GCAM-China, which are building, industry, and transportation, respectively. Similar to the power sector, the cement industry and transportation sources could also be seamlessly connected in the two models. Residential in DPEC is taken from the building sector, including cooking and heating. Boilers and kilns are two major industrial combustion sources in DPEC. Activity rates of industrial boilers and cement kilns in DPEC are provided by industry final energy-use and cement

170   energy consumption in GCAM-China, respectively. For other industrial kilns (brick and lime), the activity rates are estimated by their base-year data and the future cement energy-use curve. Future iron and steel manufacturing would be simultaneously affected by energy transformation and socioeconomic development. Due to the lack of iron and steel projections in GCAM-China (version 4.3), we estimated future iron and steel productions with projected GDP by the elastic coefficient method and fixed furnace fractions (electric, coal-fired, gas-fired and other fuel-fired) of new-built capacities to maintain the same energy

175   structure as that of the whole industry sector. The activity rates of non-energy-related sectors in the DPEC model, including industrial processes, solvent use and agriculture, were mostly driven by socioeconomic outputs from GCAM-China, which were specifically described in Sect. 2.3.

In terms of fuel mapping, the fuel types in GCAM-China include coal, liquids, gas, biomass, solar resources, nuclear, wind resources, geothermal, and hydro energy, while the MEIC model partitions each fossil fuel or biofuel in a more detailed manner

180   (Table S1). A fuel type ratio database is established based on each specific fuel structure of coal, liquids, gas and biomass in the MEIC model, and the energy outputs of GCAM-China are then distributed by this base-year proportion to show the detailed fuel-use in DPEC. The standard coal equivalent is adopted with the different units of different fuel types. This reaggregation

process of fuel types indicates that the absolute amount and relative proportion of coal, liquids, gas and biomass will evolve under the driver of the energy model, while the substructure inside each major fuel type will remain the same as the 2015 levels in MEIC.

2.2.3 Harmonization of energy consumption for the year 2015

Eliminating discrepancies in the base year between MEIC and GCAM-China models is pivotal to project future emissions, which can maintain the consistency with energy outputs to the best extent. In this study, 2015 is chosen as the base year, the historical energy and activity rates in 2015 used in MEIC are obtained from China Energy Statistical Yearbook (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2016), while the 2015 information in the GCAM-China model is projected, as GCAM is calibrated in 2010 using the historical datasets from the International Energy Agency (IEA, 2011). The deviation ranges of major fuel types in the base year vary from 6%-13%, and these discrepancies are mainly caused by different statistical methods and raw data sources. These balances should also evolve with the projected future trends instead of remaining unchanged. Thus, we harmonized the GCAM-China energy outputs (which have first been reorganized and downscaled to DPEC fuel type categories) by multiplying the base-year balance ratio (MEIC base-year energy values divided by GCAM-China base-year energy values), rather than add or subtract these balances.

2.3 Sector-based emission projection module

Emission projection module is developed for various sectors based on the historical combustion/production technology and emission control information obtained from the MEIC. Given both emission contributions and data availability, the technology-based turnover models built for several key emitting sources (e.g., coal-fired power plants, key industries, and on-road transportation) are used to simulate the dynamic changes in the unit/vehicle fleet turnover process by tracking the lifespan of each unit/vehicle on an annual basis. In addition, technology-based models developed for the remaining emission sources (i.e., other-fuel-fired power plants, other industries, off-road transportation, solvent use, residential, and agriculture sectors) are to directly forecast the effects of different technologies and control measures (Table S2). To develop sector-based projection models with different emission characteristics, we grouped the power and heating sectors into energy supply and divided the industry sector into the industrial combustion and industrial non-combustion sectors.

2.3.1 Energy supply

(1) Coal-fired power plants

Considering the coal-dominated structure in the power sector and a unit-based power plant database during 1990-2015 developed in the MEIC (Liu et al., 2015; Tong et al., 2018a and 2018b), a unit-based emission projection model for coal-fired power plants was developed in our previous study to assess the evolution of the coal-fired power unit fleet and associated emissions (Tong et al., 2018a). This model was designed to simulate power plant fleet turnover by tracking the lifespan of

each power generation unit, which can be used in various future policy analyses and emission estimates for coal-fired power plants. In this work, the total coal power generations and coal consumptions are directly obtained from GCAM-China (Table S1). We integrated this already-built projection model into the DPEC model to project future emissions from coal-fired power plants over China through the year 2050.

(2) Other fuel-fired power plants

Other fuel types combusted in China's power plants mainly include natural gas and biomass, and their future energy consumptions are obtained from GCAM-China (Table S1). A technology-based emission projections model is developed for other fuel-fired power plants due to limited historical emission information. The emission factors are estimated by projecting the effects of different combustion technologies and end-of-pipe control technologies in the target years (i.e., 2020, 2030, and 2050) according to the environmental policies (Xing et al., 2011; Tian et al., 2013), and the effects in the other years of the future are obtained through linear interpolation.

(3) Heating plants

Heating is usually supplied by conventional heat plants or combined heat and power (CHP) plants (Rezaie et al., 2012) for industrial and residential purposes. CHP systems are more thermally efficient than producing process heat alone (Lasseter et al., 2005). Therefore, the government promotes the use of CHP plants. In this work, energy consumption in heating plants by fuel type is obtained from GCAM-China (Table S1), and we developed a power technology-based model to project the technology evolution of heating plants. First, we split energy consumptions for CHP plants and conventional heat plants according their thermal efficiencies and heat supply policies. Then, we assumed that CHP plants share the same combustion technology and control technology distributions as power plants under corresponding emission scenarios. For conventional heat plants, we simply adopted a similar model that was developed for other-fuel-fired power plants.

2.3.2 Industrial combustion

(1) Coal-fired industrial boilers and kilns

The coal used in the industry sector is commonly combusted in coal-fired boilers or kilns (i.e., cement, lime, and brick kilns). Coal consumption in boilers is estimated as total industrial coal consumption from the GCAM-China minus estimated coal consumption in kilns (Table S1). Future cement coal consumption is obtained directly from GCAM-China. By assuming a simultaneous demand change among these industries of nonmetal building materials and similar improvement in energy efficiencies (i.e., energy consumed per unit product), the projections of coal consumption in lime and brick kilns are therefore based on the future trends in cement coal use (Table S1). Thus, the coal consumed in industrial boilers is derived.

A technology-based turnover emission projection model for coal-fired industrial boilers is developed (Figure S1). The historical information of coal-fired industrial boilers is obtained from the MEE (unpublished data, hereafter referred to as the

MEE-boiler database), which includes unit-level boiler capacity, combustion technology, and end-of-pipe control devices. Given that the MEE-boiler database is incomplete, instead of developing a boiler-based emission projection model, we

245   aggregated all industrial boilers into 16 categories based on boiler size (<10 t/h, 10-20 t/h, 20-35 t/h, and ≥35 t/h) and combustion technology (pulverized boiler, circulating fluidized bed, auto grate, and hand-feed grate) to generate size and technology distributions, which were then used to simulate the turnover of the industrial boiler fleet. As shown in Figure S1, the model is designed to simulate the operating industrial boiler turnover driven by the demand and retirement policy, assuming that small boilers and outdated combustion technologies are retired early. In a given year, the model first estimates the supply

250   capability of in-fleet boilers after retirement, and then estimates the supply gap under the total coal consumption and fills the gap using new coal-fired industrial boilers. Then, we modeled the changes in emission factors by boiler size and combustion technology by considering the evolution of end-of-pipe control technologies under different emission control policies. Note that we separately considered the newly built and old industrial boilers because there are usually different requirements or emissions limits for newly built and old industrial boilers.

255   Emissions from cement, lime, and brick kilns and other associated industrial processes are estimated within the same projection model, which are detailed in the industrial non-combustion sector (Sect. 2.3.3).

(2) Other fuel combustion

The energy consumption by other fuel combustion is directly obtained from GCAM-China (Table S1). The changes in emission factors are estimated by projecting the effects of different combustion technologies and end-of-pipe control measures in the

260   target years (i.e., 2020, 2030, and 2050) according to the environmental policies (Xing et al., 2011), and then, these changes are linearly interpolated to the other years in the future.

2.3.3 Industrial non-combustion

(1) Coke, iron, and steel plants

As the world's largest steel production area, China is reported to contribute almost half of global raw steel production (USGS,

265   2016). The iron and steel industry involves a series of closely linked processing steps, including preparation of raw materials, iron-making, steel-making and finishing processes (Wang et al., 2016). First, the productions of sinter, iron and steel were driven by GDP with a resilience factor law, similar to the cement projections in GCMA-China. (Table S3). For the coke industry, most of the coke is used in the iron-making process; therefore, we projected the coke production based on the change trend in iron production (Table S3). The climate and energy policies would militate the capacity structures and electric furnace

270   proportions of these subsectors.

Here, a technology-based turnover model for the iron and steel industry is built. Emissions from each process (sinter, iron, and steel) are independently projected in the model (Figure S1). The historical unit-based information of each process is also

obtained from MEE (unpublished data, hereafter referred to as the MEE-steel database), which includes the unit-based and process-based operational status (when the unit was commissioned/decommissioned), capacity, production, technology type,

275 control devices and corresponding removal efficiencies. We first aggregated the facilities of each process (sinter, iron, and steel productions) into 32 categories based on years under operation (<20 years, 20-40 years, 40-60 years, and ≥60 year), capacity size (<0.2 million tons, 0.2-1 million tons, 1-3 million tons, >3 million tons) and current technology (electric furnace and nonelectric furnace). Similar to the model for coal-fired industrial boilers, this model starts by simulating the turnover of steelwork plant fleets. In a given year, the model first estimates the production capability of in-fleet facilities after

280 implementing retirement policies by assuming the early retirement of small and old facilities with outdated technologies and then filling the gap with newly built facilities under the total predicted activity rates. Through fixing the furnace fractions (electric, coal-fired, gas-fired and other fuel-fired) of newly built capacities, the ultimately fused capacities shared the same energy structure with the whole industry sector of a given year. Finally, we model the changes in emission factors by considering the evolution of end-of-pipe control technologies for existing and newly built facilities under different

285 environmental regulations. For coke plants, we assumed that all cokes are produced in machinery ovens (Huo et al., 2012), and we simply estimated the effects of advanced control measures according to assumed emission standards due to the unavailability of plant-level data.

(2) Cement plants

China is the world's largest cement producer and consumer (Lei et al., 2011). To project future emissions from the cement

290 industry, a kiln-based turnover model is built, which is similar to the model built for coal-fired power plants (Tong et al., 2018a). We began with a kiln-based emission inventory for the 1990-2015 period, which provides historical clinker kiln-level technology and emission information including capacity, operating year, production technology, annual production of clinker and cement, as well as end-of-pipe control devices and corresponding removal efficiencies (Lei et al., 2011; Liu et al., submitted).

295 A schematic of the model for the cement industry is shown in Figure S2. The total cement demand is obtained directly from GCAM-China (Table S1). Beginning with the estimated clinker capacity demand, we simulate the year-to-year dynamics of clinker production structure turnover by considering the retirement of outdated kilns (e.g., small, old, or inefficient capacity) and construction of new kilns. The retirement rate of old kilns is driven by the future demand and forced elimination policy of outdated production capacity. A function for ordering the retirement of individual kilns is developed at the provincial level by

300 considering the production technology, age, and designed capacity with descending priority, which is similar to the function built in coal-fired power plants (Tong et al., 2018a). After considering the retired kilns, for a given year, the model then estimates the capacity gap after evaluating the clinker production capacity of in-fleet kilns and fills the gap using newly built kilns. We finally model the changes in kiln-based emission factors by considering the evolution of the end-of-pipe control technologies. To determine the order of end-of-pipe technology upgrades for each individual kiln, we set up an evolution

305 function of end-of-pipe technology at the provincial level by considering the production technology, designed capacity and age of each kiln (Tong et al., 2018a).

(3) Other metals and non-metals

Except for coke, iron, and steel plants, as well as cement plants, the emission sources of all other metal products, nonferrous metals, non-metal building materials, and other industrial products from the MEIC are grouped into "other metals and non-

310 metals". Specifically, other metal products and nonferrous metals include foundry products, aluminum, copper, zinc, alumina, and other nonferrous metals. Non-metal building materials include glass (flat glass and glass products), lime, and brick. Other industrial products mainly include products from the food and drink industry (i.e., bread, cake, biscuit, sugar, beer, wine, and spirits) and the textile industry (i.e., wool, silk, cloth, and synthetic fiber).

The future productions of the abovementioned industrial products are projected in different ways due to unavailability from

315 the GCMA-China model. The productions of other metal products and nonferrous metals are projected by building the regression models, which are used to describe the relationships among steel production (or GDP) and production of each product based on relevant statistical data from 1990 to 2015 (Table S3). For non-metal building materials, the future productions of flat glass and glass products are estimated based on the annual growth rate of the new building area (Table S3). Lime and brick productions are forecasted by applying the future trends in cement production (Table S1), which are consistent

320 with their coal use projections. To project the productions of food and drink industry and textile industry products, we built a series of regression models linking per capita GDP with their historical productions (Table S3).

Then, we estimated the changes in emission factors for each production process. In addition to production processes in the food and drink industry and textile industry, we assumed outdated production technologies in other metal industry and non-metal building materials industry have similar retirement rates as those from the iron and steel industry and cement industry,

325 respectively. The evolutions of different control measures are estimated according to emission standards. For products from the food and drink industry and textile industry, only VOC emissions are considered to be emitted. Because there is no specific production technology provided by the MEIC, we only considered the future evolution of VOC control measures. Here, we simply projected the effects of advanced de-VOC devices in the targeted years (i.e., 2020, 2030, and 2050) according to the assumed environmental regulations.

330 (4) Petrochemical industry

The petrochemical industry is one of the main VOC-related industries, and VOC emissions from 34 types of petrochemical products are estimated in the MEIC inventory. Here, we grouped these products into five subsectors: oil and gas production, distribution and refinery; fertilizer production; solvent production; synthetic materials; and other chemical products.

Specifically, oil and gas production, distribution and refinery include crude oil production, crude oil handle, oil refinery, natural

335 gas production, natural gas distribution, oil depot (gasoline and diesel), and oil station (gasoline and diesel). The activity rates

of these industrial processes are projected based on the change rates of energy demands for corresponding fuel types obtained from GCAM-China (Table S1). Fertilizer production includes the production of urea, ammonium bicarbonate, other nitrate fertilizers (e.g., sodium nitrate and calcium nitrate), and NPK fertilizer. Fertilizers are commonly used in the agriculture sector, and productions are determined by fertilizer demand of national crop yield. Therefore, we assumed that the change in fertilizer

340 production is consistent with fertilizer consumption, which is estimated in the agriculture sector (Sect. 2.3.7). Similarly, solvent productions are also determined by the market demand, which includes varnish paint, architectural paint, printing ink, and glue productions. We projected the productions based on the change rates in corresponding solvent use (Sect. 2.3.6).

Synthetic materials mainly include polyvinyl chloride (PVC) products, polystyrene, ethylene, low-density polyethylene (LDPE), high-density polyethylene (HDPE), styrene, polystyrene, vinyl chloride, PVC, propylene, and polypropylene. Each

345 synthetic material is projected by developing the regression models, and they are used to describe the relationship between national GDP and national productions based on historical statistical data (Table S3). Other chemical products, including carbon black, sulfuric acid, synthetic ammonia by coal, pulp, asphalt production, rubber, and tires, are projected using either the change trends in other related products or the regression models linked to GDP (Table S3).

For the abovementioned products, we assumed that the emission factors are only affected by the end-of-pipe control measures

350 due to no specific production technology provided by the MEIC, which is driven by the related environmental policies and emission standards.

2.3.4 Residential sector

Total energy consumed by fuel type in rural and urban areas in the residential sector are separately provided by the GCAM-China building sector (Table S1). The residential sector includes two distinct types of coal combustion equipment for different

355 uses (boilers for heating and stoves for cooking and heating), and their emission factors are quite different (Zhang et al., 2007). The final residential energy-use split for each usage (i.e., residential heating, cooking and hot water) is provided directly by the GCAM-China (Table S1), which is driven by population, building area and energy service intensity. The split ratio of two combustion technologies (boiler or stove) is exogenous and evolves with specific clean air policies.

A technology-based projection model for the residential sector is developed (Figure S3). We projected the year-to-year

360 dynamics of coal combustion technologies (boiler or stove) by assuming that coal stoves are used in individual houses for decentralized heating, cooking and hot water supply, while coal-fired boilers are used for heating in large buildings in urban areas (Zhang et al., 2007). Finally, we projected the effects of clean coal use, advanced coal stoves and boilers, and end-of-pipe control technologies for coal-fired boilers in the target years (i.e., 2020, 2030, and 2050) under different environmental regulation assumptions and then estimated the effects in the other years of the future through linear interpolation.

365   For fuel types other than coal, due to limited historical information obtained from MEIC, the effects of advanced combustion technologies and control measures are estimated according to their promotion rates based on the assumed environmental policies.

2.3.5 Transportation sector

(1) On-road transportation

370   There are nine vehicle types contained in the MEIC, including four types of passenger vehicles: heavy-duty buses (HDBs), medium-duty buses (MDBs), light-duty buses (LDBs), and minibuses (MBs); and four types of trucks: heavy-duty trucks (HDTs), medium-duty trucks (MDTs), light-duty trucks (LDTs), and mini trucks (MTs); as well as motorcycles (MCs). Additionally, passenger vehicles and trucks are further subdivided based on four fuel types, including gasoline, diesel, natural gas, and electricity. The provincial level on-road transportation energy consumptions by fuel type are obtained directly from
375   GCAM-China (Table S1).

A vehicle fleet turnover model is developed at the provincial level to simulate future energy consumption and emissions for each vehicle type by tracking the lifespan of each vehicle. As shown in Figure S4, the model is built to include the vehicle fleet turnover simulation and the evolution of emission factors. For a given year, the model first estimates newly registered vehicles using a back-calculation method based on total on-road energy consumption and historical vehicle registration data
380   (Zheng et al., 2015). Then, the model estimates the number of vehicles that survive (called "in-fleet vehicles") using historical and estimated vehicle registration data. Therefore, we derived the future's vehicle fleet and corresponding energy consumption for each vehicle type. Finally, we modeled the changes in emission factors of in-fleet vehicles, which are estimated by the product of the base emission factors and deterioration correction factor (Zheng et al., 2014). Unabated emission factors of in-fleet vehicles are determined by their registration year and the implementation year of vehicle emission standards (Figure S5).
385   To avoid double counting in the emission estimation, our model estimated tank-to-well emissions, which means that vehicles using electricity have zero emissions in on-road transportation (Huo et al., 2015).

(2) Off-road transportation

Off-road transportation contains agriculture machinery, construction machinery, low-speed truck, 3-wheelers, locomotives, and inland waterways in the MEIC inventory. Because the total energy consumption for off-road transportation in GCAM-
390   China is blended in the industrial sector, we estimated these values exogenously and subtracted them from the GCAM-China industry energy outputs. We assumed that the proportions of on-road and off-road total energy consumptions in the future are the same as the average historical rates during 2010-2015 (the historical rates varied from 0.192 to 0.203, and we used an average rate of 0.198). On the other hand, the electrification ratio of off-road energy was assumed to be similar to that of the on-road sector. Finally, the total energy consumption and structure for off-road transportation are estimated using the historical
395   on/off-road split rate, the projected on-road energy consumptions and structures.

At the provincial level, future energy consumption of each off-road type is first estimated based on the annual average growth rate during 2010-2015. Under the constraint of total off-road energy consumption, in a given year, we distributed total energy consumption to each off-road type according their energy consumption shares (Table S1). The changes in emission factors are evaluated according to the reduction proportions caused by the upgrade in emission standards (Figure S5). Here, we assumed

400   that the proportion reduction in emission factors between adjacent emission standards in the future is the same as the mean proportion reduction estimated with the published emission standards.

2.3.6 Solvent use

Solvent use is identified as one of the major VOC emission sources, which refers to the applications of products containing solvents. Solvents include paints, adhesives, inks, textile coating, pesticides, industrial and domestic cleaning agents, and so

405   on (Wei et al., 2014). In this work, 17 emission sources from solvent use in the MEIC model are further classified into paint use, printing use, pharmaceutical production, vehicle treatment, wood production, pesticide use, and household solvent use.

Paint use includes the paint use applied to architecture, vehicles, wood and other industrial purposes (Li et al., 2019). The activity rates of different types of paint use are projected by building various regression models (Klimont et al., 2002; Wei et al., 2011). Specifically, architecture interior wall coating and architecture other paint use, as well as paint use for decorative

410   wood and wood furniture, are projected based on the annual growth rate of newly built areas (Table S3). The amount of new car varnish paint and vehicle refurnish paint use are forecasted by developing the regression model linked with the newly registered vehicles and total vehicles, respectively (Table S3). The activity rates of other industry paint use are projected according to the annual growth rate of the above paint use (Table S3).

For solvent use other than paint, printing use (including printing ink and printing cleaning gasoline solvent), and solvent use

415   for wood production and pharmaceutical production are also forecasted by developing the regression models, and they are used to describe the relationship between national GDP and national amounts based on relevant statistical data from 1990 to 2015 (Table S3). Similar to vehicle paint use, the regression model of passenger vehicle treatment (for dewax or reseal) is also linked with newly registered vehicles (Table S3). Household solvent use here includes domestic solvent, dry clean C_2Cl_4 usage, and glue use, which we estimate through linkage with per capital GDP (Table S3).

420   Then, the changes in emission factors for various types of solvent use are estimated though the substitution rates of the environmentally friendly products (including low-VOC and zero-VOC products) and the effective rates of recovery technologies (e.g., carbon adsorption, incineration and membrane vapour separations) (Belaissaoui et al., 2016) according to the assumed emission standards and environmental policies.

2.3.7 Agriculture

425   The agricultural sector is distinguished as the main emission source for NH_3 emissions ($>$90% of total NH_3 emissions), including fertilizer use and livestock (Kang et al., 2016). The livestock category includes dairy cattle, other cattle, horses, donkeys, mules, pigs, goats, sheep, and broilers in the MEIC emission inventory. For each type of livestock, we projected the future amount of livestock by building the regression model, which is used to describe the relationship between national population and national annual amount based on relevant statistical data from 1990 to 2015 (Table S3). The projected
430   population is obtained from GCAM-China. The, changes in emission factors are evaluated by assessing the proportions of intensive farming systems.

Similar to the classification of fertilizer production, the regression model is developed to forecast the total fertilizer application, which is used to describe the relationship between national crop yield and total consumption of fertilizers (Table S3). The future national crop yield is estimated using the product of per capita crop yield and population (Ray et al., 2013). Then, we
435   distributed the total fertilizer use to four types of fertilizer according to the shares of each type of fertilizer in 2015 (Table S3). The changes in emission factors are modeled by evaluating the different promotion levels of slow-release fertilizer application.

3 Scenarios design

3.1 Definition of scenarios

In this work, five SSP scenarios (SSP1-5; O'Neill et al., 2014) and five RCP scenarios (RCP 8.5, 7.0, 6.0, 4.5, and 2.6) are
440   first connected to produce five economic-energy scenarios, namely, SSP1-26, SSP2-45, SSP3-70, SSP4-60, and SSP5-85. The SSPs were developed over the last several years to describe global developments leading to different challenges for mitigation and adaptation to climate change (O'Neill et al., 2014). The RCPs were defined by their total radiative forcing (cumulative measure of human GHG emissions from all sources expressed in Watts per square meter (W/m^2)) pathway and level by 2100 (van Vuuren et al., 2011). Each SSP-RCP combination represents an integrated scenario of future climate and societal change,
445   which can be used to investigate the mitigation effort required to achieve that particular climate outcome, the possibilities for adaptation under that climate outcome and assumed societal conditions, and the remaining impacts on society or ecosystems (O'Neill et al., 2016; Gidden et al., 2019).

Then, we designed three pollution control scenarios toward medium and long-term environmental goals proposed by the government. The first scenario (BAU) is designed to explore the continuous effects of the Action Plan and existing emission
450   standards (before 2015); the second scenario (ECP) is designed to basically attain the grand goal of building a "beautiful China" by 2035 (the State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2019), which requires fundamental improvement in the quality of the environment by achieving its national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS, 35μg m^{-3}) nationwide until 2030; and the

third scenario (BHE) is to ensure a clean environment and maximally protect the public's health, which requires application of best-available technology to eventually attain WHO Interim target-3 of 15 µg/m^3 annual mean $PM_{2.5}$ by 2050.

455   The BAU scenario assumes that all current environmental legislations and policies released before 2015 would be implemented without any additional environmental policy until 2050. The ECP scenario further considered the emission control policies promulgated, proposed, or likely to be proposed before 2030. Two key control zones are extracted from China to simulate the evolution of pollution controls based on comprehensive consideration of the promulgated policies, geographical locations and present air pollution conditions. One zone is the BTH and surrounding areas and the Fenwei Plain (BTH-FW), and the other

460   is the Yangtze River Delta (YRD). Based on the ECP scenario, the BHE scenario further assumes that the best-available technologies will be fully applied during 2030-2050.

   We created six emission scenarios under a range of socioeconomic, climate policy, and pollution control scenarios, including SSP1-26-ECP, SSP1-26-BHE, SSP2-45-ECP, SSP3-70-BAU, SSP4-60-BAU, and SSP5-85-BHE. These combined scenarios are used to investigate the synergistic effects of various future energy developments and emission control policies. Table 1

465   describes the relevance of the forcing pathway, the rationale for the choice of driving SSP, and the resulting government climate and environmental actions for each emission scenario.

3.2 Energy projection

3.2.1 Power sector

   The total power generation in China has significantly increased by 132.6% during 2005-2015, which is primarily driven by

470   population growth, industrialization and urbanization (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2006 and 2016; Tong et al., 2018a). However, up to 71% of China's power generation was coal fired in 2015. Given the dominant role of coal-fired power generation, China's government has promoted the development of clean energy in the power sector. Meanwhile, China has also undertaken great efforts to improve the efficiency of coal-fired power units by retiring small and inefficient coal-fired units and building large and high-efficiency units. The optimization of the generation unit fleet mix caused a significant

475   decrease in the coal consumption rate by 91.3 gce kWh^{-1}, which represents 22.4% of the energy efficiency improvement achieved during 1990-2015 (Liu et al., 2015; Tong et al., 2018a), and the coal consumption rate decreased to 315.4 gce kWh^{-1}.

   The energy scenarios adopted in this study reflect different evolutions of energy structure and power unit fleet in the power sector. Low radiative forcing targets represent aggressive low-carbon energy transformation required in the future, as well as

480   advanced carbon removal technologies (e.g., carbon capture and storage (CCS)). Under the SSP1-26 scenario, it is projected that the share of coal-fired electricity decreases to 14.1% in 2050 (including 8.3% of the coal-CCS-fired electricity share) compared to 77.6% in 2050 under the SSP5-85 scenario. Accordingly, the rapid reduction in coal-fired electricity share implies the early retirements of the currently operating coal-fired power capacity in our turnover model. According to estimates, 65%

and 45% of current coal-fired power capacity need to be retired early (lifetimes＜40 years) fitting the power structure under

485 the SS1-26 and SSP2-45 scenarios, respectively. The retirement rate for built power units derived from each energy scenario
is used to simulate the evolution of the power unit fleet.

Meanwhile, five energy scenarios also reflect various efforts on future energy efficiency improvements. It is projected that the
net coal consumption rate decreases of 12.7%, 12.1%, 11.3%, 11.9% and 10.4% during 2015-2050 will be achieved under the
SSP1-26, SSP2-45, SSP3-70, SSP4-60, and SSP5-85 scenarios, respectively. The achievement of energy efficiency

490 improvement relies not only on the optimization of the future power unit fleet but also on the application of advanced
technologies for newly built units (e.g., ultra-supercritical technology). The penetration rates of advanced technologies are
estimated and integrated into our projection model.

3.2.2 Industrial sector

During 2005-2015, the energy consumption of China's industrial sector has greatly increased by 35.7% (from 1879.1 to 2922.8

495 million tec), which is driven by rapid industrial development and ever-increasing demand of energy-intensive products (NBS,
2007 and 2016). In contrast, the energy intensity per unit GDP in the industry sector rapidly decreased during the same period.
In recent years, the Chinese government has vigorously adjusted the industrial structure by phasing out outdated industrial
technologies and capacities, especially in key industries (e.g., coal-fired boilers, steel and iron plants, and cement plants; Zhang
et al., 2019). Meanwhile, China aims to save energy through industrial energy transformation and energy efficiency

500 improvement.

For industrial boilers, China first proposed to eliminate coal-fired boilers with capacities smaller than 10 t/h by the end of 2017
in the Action Plan. Energy is saved through both the replacement of large high-efficiency coal-fired boilers and switching to
other clean energy-fired boilers. The evolutions of boiler fleet turnover under different energy scenarios were fully simulated
in our projection model. Similar to the SSP1-26 scenario, the coal used in industrial boilers decreases rapidly, with 54.3% of

505 coal saved in 2050 compared to 2015. Accordingly, the reduction in coal use would drive the early retirement of coal-fired
industrial boilers, and it is estimated that all the coal-fired boiler capacities (smaller than 35 t/h) should be retired by 2050 and
75% of large coal-fired boiler capacities (larger than 65 t/h) would be built in our projection model.

Similarly, to reduce energy intensity, the outmoded production technologies would be replaced with more energy-efficient
ones in the steel and iron industry and the cement industry. The facility fleet turnover is simulated under various retirement

510 policies reflected from corresponding energy scenarios. As a result, under the SSP1-26 scenario, to restrict the development
of energy-intensive heavy industry, the total productions of steel and cement are projected to decrease by 55.3% and 93.9%
during 2015-2050, respectively.

3.2.3 Residential sector

Residential energy consumption in China has steadily increased in the past few decades, driven by increases in total population
515   and building areas (Wang et al., 2014). The total energy consumption in the residential sector increased by 44.9% from 2005-
2015, with a 4.2% annual average growth rate (NBS, 2007 and 2016). In recent years, the Chinese government has promoted
a series of energy-saving measures to fight against air pollution from the residential sector, including the use of clean energy
and clean use of coal (Shen et al., 2019). On the one hand, coal cleaning technologies (e.g., coal washing) are in widespread
use, and the coal-washing rate is required should be up to 65% by the end of 2015 according to the energy development of the
520   12th FYP. On the other hand, China aimed to switch residential coal to other types of clean energy (e.g., natural gas, electricity,
or renewable energy). For instance, by the end of 2017, energy consumption in six million households in China (4.8 million
households in BTH and surrounding regions) switched from coal to electricity and natural gas (Zhang et al., 2019).

As estimated in GCAM-China and processed through our energy module, we estimated that approximately 63.0 and 27.3
million households nationwide would switch from coal to electricity and natural gas by 2050 under SSP1-26 and SSP2-45
525   scenarios, respectively. Accordingly, 181.3 and 73.9 million tons of coal energy are saved by 2050 under the SSP1-26 and
SSP2-45 scenarios, respectively, compared to the SSP5-85 scenario. Coal washing can substantially reduce air pollution
emissions by lowering the ash and sulfur contents in coal. The effects of coal washing during 2015-2050 are estimated
according to current energy-saving policies and assumptions of future energy-saving policies under different energy scenarios
because GCAM-China cannot reflect these measures due to no specific coal classification. We assumed that a measure of coal
530   washing would continue to be carried out in the future under the SSP1-26 and SSP2-45 scenarios to fit other energy-saving
measures under low radiative forcing targets. We estimated that 85% and 55% of coal-washing rates would be achieved by
2050 under the SSP1-26 and SSP2-45 scenarios, respectively.

3.2.4 Transportation sector

Attributed to the dramatic rise in the total vehicle population, the energy consumption in China's transportation sector grew at
535   an annual average rate of 50.1% during 2005-2015 (NBS, 2007 and 2016). Energy consumed in the transportation sector can
be saved by improving fuel efficiency and promoting electric vehicles (Wang et al., 2014). China has implemented fuel-
efficiency standards for light-duty vehicles since 2004, and an updated standard issued in 2011 requires that the efficiency for
passenger cars is up to 14.3 km L^{-1} by 2015. Meanwhile, China also promotes the development of electric vehicles, and it is
reported that the population of electric vehicles will be up to ~0.5 million by 2015 (The Ministry of Public Security, 2016).

540   Energy scenarios from GCAM-China are adopted to estimate future vehicle fleet turnover. It is projected that the total vehicle
population would be up to 2.64, 2.29, 2.06, 2.34, and 3.25 billion by 2050 under the SSP1-26, SSP2-45, SSP3-70, SSP4-60,
and SSP5-85 scenarios, respectively. We found that the share of electric vehicles is as low as 13.8%, even under the SSP1-26
scenario, which underestimates the future development of electric vehicles in China according China's 13th FYP development

planning of electric vehicles. For consistency, we followed the energy structure and related assumptions from GCAM-China
545   in our emission projections. The improvement in fuel efficiencies for each vehicle type reflected in GCAM-China is also
estimated though energy consumption and projected vehicle kilometer traveled (VKT), which has been integrated into our
fleet turnover model. As a result, there is a slight but consistent improvement in the average fuel economy. Under the SSP1-
26 scenario, fuel-efficiency increases from 4.8 km L^{-1} in 2015 to 5.3 km L^{-1} in 2050 for heavy-duty diesel vehicles, from 3.8
km L^{-1} in 2015 to 4.6 km L^{-1} in 2050 for heavy-duty gasoline vehicles, and fuel efficiency for light-duty gasoline vehicles
550   increases from 14.3 km L^{-1} in 2015 to 25 km L^{-1} in 2030 and then remains steady.

3.3 End-of-pipe emission control scenarios

3.3.1 Power sector

Figure 2 shows the policy evolutions under each emission scenario in the power sector. Under the BAU scenario, we assumed
that all the coal-fired power plants would follow the emission limits of the standard GB 13223-2003 until 2050. The emission
555   limits for SO_2, NO_x, and particulates are 100, 100 (200 for existing), and 30 mg/m^3, respectively. Under the ECP scenario,
China pledged an "ultralow" emission standard in December 2015, the emission standard is strengthened to 30 for SO_2, 50 for
NO_x, and 10 mg/m^3 for particulates, and all the retrofits are achieved nationwide by 2020 and earlier in key regions. Under the
BAT scenario, we assumed additional BAT recommended value (limits of 20 for SO_2, 30 for NO_x, and 5 mg/m^3 for particulates)
from the developed countries are considered after 2030 to achieve the 2050 air quality target. The policy evolutions of other
560   thermal power plants are similar to the coal-fired power plants except the policy effect time and the additional special limits
enforced before the "ultralow" emission standard between 2018-2024.

3.3.2 Industrial sector

The industrial sector includes various subsectors, as described above. Figure 3 shows the evolution of emission control policies
in different subsectors under three emission scenarios, as we can see, emissions from all the main industries are regulated
565   through national emission standards, except the key VOC-related industries, by 2015. All the regions would follow these
current emission standards until 2050, and there are no specific regulations for key VOC-related industries under the BAU
scenarios. Furthermore, under the ECP scenarios, "ultralow" emission transformation is assumed to be completed in all
industries by the end of 2030 except the key VOC-related industries, while we also assumed the key VOC-related industries
would reach low emission levels. More precisely, based on the "ultralow" emission standards, all industries would achieve the
570   BAT recommended values by the end of 2050 under the BHE scenario.

Different emission scenarios reflect to what extent the emission standards are strengthened; here, we comprehensively
considered the evolution differentiations among subsectors and regions. First, we assumed that the completion year for each
standard/policy in key control zones is a few years earlier than other regions in China according to the promulgated policies.

For instance, a policy on "ultralow" emission transformation in the iron and steel industry is implemented in 2019, which

575 requires the completion of retrofits using the ultralow emission technique in key regions (i.e., the BTH and FW Plain, and the YRD region) by the end of 2025. Therefore, we assumed that all the ultralow emission retrofits would be finished in other regions by the end of 2030. Second, subsectoral differentiation within the same policy is considered. Taking the "ultralow" emission standard as an example, we assumed that the "ultralow" emission standard would eventually be achieved in all industries. The "ultralow" emission standard was first raised in coal-fired power plants, which was implemented in 2016 and

580 would be completed nationwide by the end of 2020 as planned. Hereafter, the "ultralow" emission standard for the iron and steel plants was issued in 2019, which required the retrofits to be completed to at least 80% capacity nationwide by the end of 2025. Following the coal-fired power plants and iron and steel plants, we projected an "ultralow" emission standard for cement plants that would then be proposed during 2020-2025, and retrofits would be accomplished by 2030.

3.3.3 Residential sector

585 There is no specific regulation in the residential sector before 2015; therefore, we assumed that emissions from the residential sector are not regulated under the BAU scenario (Figure S6). Under the ECP scenario, clean coal and advanced stoves have been promoted to reduce emissions in recent environmental policies. We assumed continual upgrades for stoves and coal washing to reach relatively low emission levels through 2030. While under the BHE scenarios, for the long-term air quality target, we supplemented the enhanced controls through innovations of stoves and residential coals until 2050.

3.3.4 Transportation sector

590

Emission reductions from the transportation sector are mainly achieved through fleet turnover in recent years, which means that old vehicles are being replaced by newer, cleaner models subjected to tougher emission standards (Zheng et al., 2018). Therefore, upgrading emission standards plays a vital role in reducing emissions. We modeled the evolution of emission standards for light-duty gasoline vehicles, heavy-duty gasoline vehicles, light-duty diesel vehicles, heavy-duty diesel vehicles

595 for on-road transportation and off-road transportation (Figure S5). Under the BAU scenario, we assume that all the registered vehicles comply with the emission standards issued before 2017 and through 2050 with no more stringent emission standards. Therefore, China 5/V emission standards for all on-road vehicles except heavy-duty gasoline vehicles (China 4) are implemented under this scenario. The China III emission standard for off-road transport is implemented. To reduce emissions, further implementation of China 6/VI emission standards for all on-road vehicles and China V for off-road transport is assumed

600 under the ECP scenario. Under the most stringent scenario (BHE scenario), "assumed China 7" emission standards for all on-road vehicles and China VI emission standards for off-road transport would be gradually implemented during 2030-2050.

3.3.5 Solvent use

Similar to the VOC-related industries, there are currently no specific regulations for controlling VOC emissions from solvent use. Therefore, we assumed that no effective regulations are implemented under the BAU scenario. Under the ECP scenario,
605 to reach low emission levels of VOCs, we further improved the water-soluble solvent use and installed widespread VOC control facilities in the coating and painting industry. Note that emissions decrease to relatively low levels in the key control zones earlier than in the other regions. Under the BHE scenario, to maximally reduce VOC emissions, we considered the innovations of solvent use and VOC control facilities in the last five years before 2050 (2045-2050) according to the best-available technologies from developed countries (European Commission, 2016).

610 ### 3.3.6 Agriculture

Agriculture is one of the least-controlled emission sources in recent years (Zheng et al., 2018). We assumed enhancement of NH_3 controls under all emission scenarios except the BAU scenario. Before 2020, we promoted the use of organic fertilizer and resource utilization of poultry excrement and straw. During 2020-2030, we further reduced emissions through the enhancement of intensive cultivation and grazing and the promotion of slow-release fertilizer under the ECP scenario. Under
615 the BHE scenario, except for the early achievement of relatively low emission levels nationwide, the innovation of cultivation and grazing is further considered during 2045-2050.

4 Results

4.1 Evolution of China's future energy system during 2015-2050

Figure 4 shows the yearly evolution of the primary energy structure under five energy scenarios during 2015-2050. At present,
620 coal is the main primary energy source, accounting for more than 60% of the total primary energy in 2015. Under the lax climate targets, coal will continue to have the dominant role in the future's energy supply structure. We can see a similar future primary energy structure under the SSP3-70, SSP4-60, and SSP5-85 energy scenarios, and the coal fractions are relatively stable until 2050 and close to those in 2015. For the other energy sources, there are obvious increases in the use of gas and biomass sources under the SSP3-70, SSP4-60, and SSP5-85 energy scenarios, in total accounting for 13.9%, 16.4%, and 16.1%
625 in 2050 compared to ~6% in 2015, respectively. Correspondingly, the fractions of liquids are reduced by 5~7% during 2015-2050. Under the less-stringent climate target (i.e., the SSP2-45 scenario), coal is gradually replaced by gas and biomass, and the coal fraction decreases to 45.5% by 2050 with an annual reduction rate of 1.0%. We can see that renewable energy develops very slowly under the SSP2-45 scenario, and only a 1.7% increase in renewable penetration would be achieved over the next 35 years. Under the stringent climate target of the SSP1-26 energy scenario, the effects include rapid decreases in coal use and
630 increases in renewable energy to limit climate warming. The coal fraction decreases to 15.7% by 2050, with an annual reduction rate of 4.0% during 2015-2050. Meanwhile, the renewable fraction increases from 11.0% in 2015 to 37.7% in 2050.

In China's recent renewable energy development plan, China has proposed the objective to increase the share of non-fossil energy in total primary energy consumption to 15% by 2020 and to 20% by 2030, which implies determination of energy transformation and low-carbon energy system development for the Chinese government (National Development and Reform

635   Commission, 2016). Under all five energy scenarios, nuclear energy contributes very small fractions of total primary energy. This is because GCAM-China fixes nuclear plans by 2030, and limited growth is subsequently considered in only coastal provinces.

To investigate the changes in sectoral energy consumption, Figure 5 further shows coal, liquids, and gas consumption in 2020, 2030, and 2050 in the power, industry, residential and transportation sectors, respectively, under five energy scenarios. As

640   shown in Figure 5, we can see the different energy consumption structures among sectors, and coal is mainly consumed in the power and industry sectors, and only under the SSP1-26 scenario is the future's total consumption of coal decreased compared to 2015. By 2050, the total coal consumption can reach nearly 6,000 million tons by 2050 under the SSP5-85 scenario with an ~60% increase during 2015-2050. Under the SSP3-70, SSP4-60, and SSP5-85 scenarios, the increase in coal consumption mainly occurred before 2030, and a slight decrease in coal consumption occurred during 2030-2050, except in the SSP5-85

645   scenario. In contrast, the decrease in coal consumption occurred during 2030-2050 under the SSP1-26 scenario, which implies the acceleration of energy transformations in the far future to meet the stringent climate target. Liquids are mainly consumed in the transportation sector (63.5% in 2015), and most of the rest are consumed in the industry sector (31.9% of the total).

Liquids consumption shows a significant increase in the transportation sector even under the SSP1-26 scenario due to the ever-increasing vehicle demand and limited fuel switching considered in the GCAM-China model (Figure S7). Thus, 16.3%, 71.7%,

650   and 126.6% increases are achieved in the transportation sector in 2020, 2030, and 2050, respectively, under the SSP1-26 scenario compared to 2015. The liquid consumption in the industrial sector is relatively stable with small changes. The growth rates of total liquid consumption slow down during 2030-2050 under all energy scenarios except the SSSP5-85 scenario, which is mainly driven by changes in liquid consumption in the transportation sector. Gas is mainly consumed in the industrial, residential, and power sectors, accounting for 58.2%, 23.1%, and 18.1%, respectively, of the total consumption in 2015. In the

655   future, more gas would be consumed under the lower global warming target because gas is defined as clean fossil fuel compared to coal and liquids. The increase in gas consumption mainly occurs in the residential sector under all energy scenarios driven by the ever-increasing demand and energy policy of replacing coal with gas in the future's residential energy structure. Under the most stringent climate target, gas consumption increased by 199.4% from 2015-2050 compared to 54.1% in the power sector and 79.7% in the industry sector. In total, the more stringent the climate target is, the larger the required adjustments in

660   the future energy structure will be.

4.2 Emission trends during 2010-2050

Figure 6 shows the historical and future emission trends of major air pollutant emissions (SO_2, NO_x, $PM_{2.5}$ and NMVOCs) from 2010 to 2050 under six designed scenarios. Historical emissions during 2010-2015 are obtained from MEIC, and all designed scenarios represent different emission mitigation pathways under the various evolutions of future societal conditions

665 and climate and environmental policies. China's anthropogenic emissions during 2010-2015 are estimated to peak in 2011, 2012, and 2011 for SO_2, NO_x, and $PM_{2.5}$ emissions, respectively. In addition, SO_2, NO_x, and $PM_{2.5}$ emissions have declined to 17.4 Tg, 23.7 Tg, and 9.1 Tg by 2015 (Table 2), respectively, which are mainly the benefits of a series of effective environmental policies applied over the past few years. In contrast, NMVOCs emissions have persistently increased by 17.2% from 2010-2015.

670 In the SSP3-70-BAU and SSP4-60-BAU scenarios, under the pessimistic development trends with limited investments and attention to climate and environmental issues in China, the emissions of major air pollutants would slightly change except for an obvious increase in NO_x emissions (~43% in both the SSP3-70-BAU and SSP4-60-BAU scenarios) in the next 35 years. Due to the continued effect of the Action Plan and other current environmental policies, there are still obvious decreases in emissions under the SSP4-60-BAU scenario in the next few years, with 12.9% of SO_2, 5.8% of NO_x, and 4.7% of $PM_{2.5}$

675 emissions decreasing from 2015 to 2018. This result implies that stringent and effective environmental policies are needed and play an important role in medium and long-term emission mitigation. Although there is a relatively lax radiative forcing target in the SSP5-85-BHE scenario, all the major air pollutant emissions are largely reduced by enhanced emission control measures when comparing the SSP5-85-BHE and SSP3-70-BAU scenarios. In 2030, SO_2, NO_x, $PM_{2.5}$, and NMVOCs emissions under the SSP5-85-BHE scenario further decrease by 68%, 67%, 59%, and 48% compared to the SSP3-70-BAU scenario,

680 respectively. Meanwhile, low-carbon energy development also plays an equally important role in future emission mitigations. The SSP1-26-ECP scenario could further reduce the SO_2, NO_x, $PM_{2.5}$ and NMVOCs emissions by 24%, 17%, 13%, and 3% in 2030 compared to the SSP1-45-ECP scenario due to low-carbon energy transitions. In addition, low-carbon energy transitions would have much larger benefits in the far future, and the SO_2, NO_x, $PM_{2.5}$, and NMVOCs emissions under the SSP1-26-ECP scenario would be 52%, 34%, 30%, and 5% lower, respectively than those under the SSP1-45-ECP scenario in

685 2050.

In addition, under the same socioeconomic and energy pathways, the SSP1-26-ECP and SSP1-26-BHE scenarios have similar emission mitigation pathways during 2015-2030 due to similar and strict enforcement of environmental policies, while the SSP1-26-BHE scenario can further reduce SO_2, NO_x, $PM_{2.5}$ and NMVOCs emissions by 27%, 26%, 15%, and 33%, respectively, by 2050 after applying the best-available technologies compared to the SSP1-26-ECP scenario. However, we

690 found that limited mitigations are obtained during 2030-2050 from applying the best-available technologies, which implies that the emission mitigation potential from emission control measures is gradually exhausted in the long-term actions.

Compared to the emission control measures, low-carbon transitions play a more substantial role in the medium and long-term mitigation pathways.

Different sectors have different emission reduction potentials and mitigation pathways under various scenarios. Figure 7 further shows the sectoral emission contributions of major air pollutants under all designed scenarios in the years 2020, 2030 and 2050. As shown in Figure 7, the most important sector identified in 2015 is the industrial sector for all major air pollutants, which contributes 59%, 41%, 48%, and 33% of SO_2, NO_x, $PM_{2.5}$ and NMVOCs emissions, respectively. For SO_2 emissions, the industrial sector mainly drives the changes under all the scenarios; for instance, almost 56-59% of the total emission reductions are obtained from the industrial sector in 2050 under the SSP5-85-BHE, SSP2-45-ECP, SSP1-26-BHE, and SSP1-26-ECP scenarios. Driven by the ultralow emission standard, SO_2 emissions from the power sector rapidly decrease in the near future (i.e., 2015-2020), which is similar to the NO_x and $PM_{2.5}$ emissions. In addition, the SO_2 emissions from the residential sector largely decrease through low-carbon transitions when comparing the SSP1-26-BHE and SSP5-85-BHE scenarios. For NO_x, emissions from all the sectors increase under the SSP3-70-BAU and SSP4-60-BAU scenarios due to no additional environmental policies being applied during 2015-2050. NO_x emissions under the SSP5-85-BHE scenario are largely reduced, while the SSP1-26-BHE scenario has relatively large but similar reductions for the industrial and transportation sectors in 2030, which implies that low-carbon energy transitions have limited effects on NO_x emission reductions during 2015-2030. In 2050, low-carbon energy transitions could further reduce NO_x emissions from the power and industrial sectors by 78% and 50% through power structure and industrial structure adjustments.

The reductions in $PM_{2.5}$ emissions under the SSP3-70-BAU and SSP4-60-BAU scenarios are contributed by the residential sector through the wide application of advanced residential stoves. Policies on industrial structure adjustment can lead to $PM_{2.5}$ emission reductions of 45% by 2050 when comparing the SSP1-26-ECP and SSP2-45-ECP scenarios, and the best-available technologies could further reduce 14% of industrial emissions by 2050 when comparing the SSP1-26-ECP and SSP1-26-BHE scenarios. Low-carbon energy transitions have very limited effects on $PM_{2.5}$ emission reductions from the residential sector when comparing the SSP1-26-BHE and SSP5-85-BHE scenarios because biomass dominates the $PM_{2.5}$ emissions and there are similar projections of biomass consumptions under these two energy scenarios. NMVOCs emissions are dominated by solvent use and industrial sectors in 2015. Under the SSP3-7-BAU and SSP4-60-BAU scenarios, NMVOCs emissions changed slightly during 2015-2050, mainly due to emission increases from the industrial sector, which partly offsets the decrease from the transportation sector. Under the SSP5-85-BHE scenario, emission reductions from the industrial and solvent use sectors contribute 23% and 32% of total NMVOCs reductions, respectively. NMVOCs emissions from the industrial and solvent use sectors are only reduced by 58% and 43%, respectively, under the SSP1-26-BHE scenario during 2015-2050. Even under the SSP1-26-ECP scenario, limited NMVOCs reductions from industry and solvent use sectors are obtained, which implies that controlling NMVOCs emissions in the future is challenging compared to other major air pollutants, particularly in the industrial and solvent use sectors. By 2050, if low-carbon energy transitions and best-available technologies are fully achieved, under

the SSP1-26-BHE scenario, the industrial sector is still the dominant emission source for all the major air pollutants, in addition

725   to the transportation sector for NO_x, the residential sector for $PM_{2.5}$, and the solvent use sector for NMVOCs emissions. Therefore, we distinguished the key emission sources during different periods, and the control measures should be strengthened in the future.

5 Discussion

5.1 Comparison with emission estimates from the CMIP6 database

730   In this study, although we created our scenarios based on the CMIP6 global development modes and societal conditions, more realistic short and long-term emission control policies are integrated into our emission scenarios in China. Here, we compare the emissions under corresponding scenarios from our study and the CMIP6 database (Figure 8). There are obvious gaps for major air pollutant emissions in the base year except NMVOCs, and the SO_2, NO_x, and BC emissions in 2015 from the CMIP6 database are higher than those from our MEIC emission inventory by 43%, 29%, and 79%, respectively. These gaps are mainly

735   caused by the underestimation of emission reductions obtained from China's Action Plan in the CMIP6 database, and the emission bias in the base year would pass to the future and lead to different emission mitigation pathways. Other than the emission gaps in the base year, there also exist obvious differences in future emission trends under corresponding scenarios. In the CMIP6 database, emissions under the SS3-70-weak and SSP4-60-weak scenarios show opposing future trends, while emissions under the SSP3-70-BAU and SSP4-60-BAU scenarios from this work have similar trends and slight changes except

740   for the NO_x emissions during 2015-2050. The projections of emission factor (EF) evolutions are mainly driven by development modes and societal conditions in the CMIP6 estimate, while our estimates of future EF evolutions are mainly driven by environmental policies. Therefore, the continuous effects of the Action Plan could not offset the ever-increasing energy demand during 2015-2030; consequently, emissions such as SO_2 and NO_x increase in the corresponding period. The SSP5-85-BHE and SSP5-85-strong scenarios have similar mitigation trends except for NMVOC emissions, and larger reductions are

745   obtained before 2030. The NMVOC emissions under the SSP5-85-strong scenario in the CMIP6 are probability driven by the assumptions of a high economic pace and few technology options. While under the SSP5-85-BHE scenario, we still assumed that the best-available technologies are fully applied. When comparing the SSP2-45-ECP and SSP2-45-medium scenarios, we see that similar emission reduction trends occurred during 2015-2030, except for the NMVOC emissions, while continuous emission reductions were observed under the SSP2-45-medium scenario, which is mainly caused by different policy

750   assumptions. Thus, we assumed that no environmental policies are further considered after achieving national air quality standards by 2030. Under the most optimistic development modes and strict forcing targets (i.e., the SSP1-26-BHE and SSP1-26-strong scenarios), all major air pollutant emissions rapidly decrease, while emissions in the year 2050 among species show various differences. SO_2 and BC emissions have relatively small differences compared to NO_x and NMVOC emissions between these two scenarios. CMIP6 has more optimist projections for NMVOC emission reductions; in fact, the difficulty in reducing

755   NMVOCs emissions is much larger than fossil fuel-dominated species because the emission sources are highly dispersive. Therefore, we projected a limited NMVOCs emission reduction even with the best-available technologies applied. In summary, the emission difference ranges of various species between two sets of scenarios are much larger in the near future, such as 2020, while the ranges are gradually expanded over time, and eventually, our scenarios have smaller differences with the CMIP6 scenarios. This result is mainly because our scenarios are based on the more realistic Chinese development in the near

760   future under the constraint of issued environmental policies and emissions in the base year.

Additionally, we compared the CO_2 emissions between two set of scenarios, as shown in Figure 9, and the corresponding scenarios between the CMIP6 scenarios and ours are quite similar due to the same energy scenarios being adopted, and the differences are mainly from the different CO_2 EFs adopted. Figure 9 shows that CO_2 emissions would continue increasing until 2050 when radiative forcing targets are above 7.0 W/m^2. Under the SSP3-70-BAU and SSP5-85-BHE scenarios, CO_2

765   emissions increase by 55% and 61% during 2015-2050, respectively. Under the radiative forcing targets of 6.0 and 4.5 W/m^2, CO_2 emissions begin to decrease during 2030-2035, and finally, emissions in 2050 under the SSP2-45-ECP scenario would be lower than the emission levels of 2015. For the SSP1-26-BHE scenario, CO_2 emissions would start to decrease in the very near future (during 2015-2020), and a 61% reduction is achieved during 2015-2050.

In particular, we compare the sectoral emissions under the SSP1-26-BHE scenario from this work and the SSP1-26-strong

770   scenario from the CMIP6 database, and the sector maps are shown in Table S4. As shown in Figure 10, the differences in the base year are mainly contributed by industry for the SO_2 and NO_x emissions and the power and heating sector for NMVOCs and BC emissions. This is probability because of the underestimations in the SO_2 and NO_x control levels in the industrial sector and different EFs chosen for the NMVOCs and BC in the power and heating sector. During 2015-2050, the SO_2 and NO_x emissions under the SSP1-26-strong scenario gradually closed the gaps with the SSP1-26-BHE scenario. For the NMVOC

775   emissions, the difference in 2050 is caused by different projections in the industrial and solvent use sectors. Under the projections from the SSP1-26-strong scenario, the emission reductions for NMVOCs during 2015-2030 are dominated by the industrial and power and heating sectors. During 2030-2050, the emission reductions are dominated by the solvent use sector. For BC emissions, in addition to the difference from the power and heating sector, the difference between these two scenarios is magnified by the industrial sector, and the CMIP6 has limited emission reduction from the industrial sector, which becomes

780   the dominate sector by 2050. Under the SSP1-26-BHE scenario, except for the dominant contributions from the residential sector during 2015-2050, the transportation sector became another dominant sector by 2050 due to limited emission reductions.

5.2 Limitations and uncertainties

In this study, a dynamic emission projection model was developed to estimate the evolution of future air pollutants and CO_2 emissions, and a comprehensive understanding of future emission trends was achieved by connecting various social-economic

785   developments and climate targets and different pollution control policies during 2015-2050. Under the strictest scenario

designed in this study (i.e., SSP1-26-BHE scenario), from 2015-2050, emission reductions of 87% for SO_2, 74% for NO_x, 78% for $PM_{2.5}$, and 55% for NMVOCs could be achieved under a combination of low-carbon energy transitions and best-available environmental policies. During 2015-2030, end-of-pipe controls play a very important role in future air pollutant emission mitigations to facilitate staged air quality targets when comparing the SSP5-85-BHE and SSP3-70-BAU scenarios. With the

790 exhaustion of the emission reduction potential from end-of-pipe controls, low-carbon energy transitions could not only reduce CO_2 emissions to meet the climate target but also fundamentally reduce the rest of emissions during 2030-2050 to achieve long-term air quality targets when we compared the SSP5-85-BHE and SSP1-26-BHE scenarios. Our analyses identify the feasible pathways for achieving emission reductions for air pollutants to maximally protect public health. In fact, the flexibility and compatibility of the DPEC model can be applied in the pre-evaluations and post-evaluations of various future policies and

795 regulations. More importantly, DPEC runs in 1-year time steps starting from the base year and move into the future, and these runs allow for tracking of the annual effectiveness of each policy, which is especially useful for short-term evaluations.

There are several limitations and uncertainties in this study. First, the energy scenarios we used in this work are derived from the GCAM-China model, in which the reference scenario is counterfactual and does not explicitly consider mitigation actions. For instance, China aims to develop renewable energy in the power sector to bring clean electricity in the future. The effects

800 of clean energy power are expected to increase rapidly in the future. As announced in the 13th FYP, the generation share of renewable energy is planned to increase to 27% by 2020. Even the SSP1-26 scenario underestimates the actions taken on the adjustment of power energy structure by the Chinese government (20% of renewable energy in 2020; Figure S8). Additionally, China has launched several initiatives to promote electric vehicles and aims to increase the population of electric vehicles to 5 million in 2020 according to the development plan for new-energy vehicles (Wang et al., 2014). In contrast, all the energy

805 scenarios obtained from the GCAM-China model except the SSP1-26 scenario have low projections of the future effects of electric vehicles (Figure S7), and the effects of new-energy vehicles only increases to ~2% by the end of 2050. In the future, a long-term energy scenario coupled with China's short and long-term energy policies is needed to accurately estimate the future mitigation potential or project future emission mitigation pathways.

Second, the policies promulgated from governments usually only have macro measures and completion years without yearly

810 detailed and parameterized actions. Our parameterized process within each scenario may underestimate or overestimate the emission reductions from each measure. For example, the effectiveness of measures targeting small and scattered emission sources (e.g., phasing out small and old industrial factories and eliminating small coal-fired industrial boilers) is difficult to evaluate and reasonably parameterize, which may lead to higher uncertainty ranges in future emission estimates.

Finally, emission estimates in the base year are uncertain due to incomplete knowledge of underlying data (Zhao et al., 2011;

815 Liu et al., 2015). The uncertainties from the historical emission inventories are widely quantified in previous works (e.g., Zhang et al., 2009; Lei et al., 2011; Lu et al., 2011; Li et al., 2017). These uncertainties may pass to our projections model and

bring new uncertainties to the emission reduction rates and future emission mitigation pathways, but there are few impacts on the emission estimates for the year 2050.

5.3 Policy implications

820   Air quality improvement and climate change governance are of equal importance in the future environmental management of China. Both air pollution and climate change issues are essentially energy problems, especially coal problems in the current stage in China. On the one hand, actions of energy conservation and low-carbon energy transitions to reduce CO_2 emissions also reduce co-emitted air pollutants such as SO_2, NO_x and $PM_{2.5}$, bringing co-benefits for air quality. Therefore, in this study, we emphasize the importance of air pollution and climate co-governance under current environmental situations for China.

825   The Chinese government should strengthen the co-governance policy design in the future to achieve maximal co-benefit effects with the least actions and investments. On the other hand, limited air quality improvement could be obtained from low-carbon energy transitions in the near future due to the inertia of current energy systems and no quick switch to low-carbon energy (Kramer et al., 2009; Tong et al., 2019). Therefore, the quick promotion of "ultralow" emission standards in the power and industrial sectors, as well as the relatively low emission standards in other sectors, are vital for near-term air quality targets,

830   although there is no obvious effect on CO_2 emission reductions. In summary, in this study, we provide a comprehensive assessment from the air quality and climate co-governance perspectives through scenario analysis, which is valuable for policy makers.

Data availability

Data generated from this study are available from the corresponding author upon request (qiangzhang@tsinghua.edu.cn).

835   **Author contributions**

Q.Z. designed the research; D.T., J.C., Y.L., L.Y., C.H., Y.Q., H.Z., and Y.Z. developed the emission projection model; S.Y. and L.C. developed the GCAM-China model; M.L., F.L., and B.Z. provided historical emission data; Q.Z., D.T., J.C., Y.L., S.Y., G.G., and L.C. developed future emission scenarios and interpreted data; D.T., J.C., and Q.Z. prepared the manuscript with contributions from all co-authors.

840   **Competing interests**

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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Dynamic Projection model for Emissions in China (DPEC)

Energy-model-driven activity rate projection module

Climate targets

Driving forces

Energy system model
(GCAM-China)

Energy consumptions

Source mapping

Scenario design

Shared socio-economic
pathways (SSPs)

Representative concentration
pathways (RCPs)

Emission control policies

Standard energy
outputs

Non-energy related
activity rates

Multi-resolution Emission Inventory (MEIC)

Framework of MEIC

Source category and activity rates

Emission information

Technology and control information

Sector-based emission projection module

Technology-based turnover model

Coal-fired power plants

Key industry (Coal-fired industrial
boiler/ Iron and steel/ Cement)

On-road transportation

Simple technology-based model

Other-fuel-fired power plants

Other industries

Off-road transportation

Solvent use

Residential   Agriculture

1060

Figure 1: Framework of the Dynamic Projection model for Emissions in China (DPEC).

Emission source	Scenario	Region	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	...	2025	...	2028	2029	2030	2031	...	2035	...	2040	...	2045	2050
Coal-fired power plants	BAU	All region	GB 13223-2011 [SO₂-100; NOₓ-100/200; PM-30]																				
	ECP	BTH & FW Plain	GB 13223-2011	ultra-low emission standard[1] [SO₂-35; NOₓ-50; PM-10]																			
		YRD	GB 13223-2011	ultra-low emission standard[1]																			
		Other regions	GB 13223-2011	ultra-low emission standard[1]																			
	BHE	All region	GB 13223-2011	ultra-low emission standard[1]														BAT recommended value[2] [SO₂-20; NOₓ-30; PM-5]					
Other thermal power plants	BAU	All region	GB 13223-2011																				
	ECP	BTH & FW Plain	GB 13223-2011					special limits[3] [SO₂-50; NOₓ-100; PM-20]		ultra-low emission standard[1]													
		YRD	GB 13223-2011					special limits[3]		ultra-low emission standard[1]													
		Other regions	GB 13223-2011					special limits[3]		ultra-low emission standard[1]													
	BHE	All region	GB 13223-2011					special limits[3]		ultra-low emission standard[1]									BAT recommended value[2]				

Figure 2: Policy evolution under each emission scenarios in the power sector during 2015-2050. Power sector is divided into coal-fired power plants, and other thermal power plants. Policies in each emission source are strengthened in the order of blue, green, and orange color, and gradient color reflects the transition from one standard to another standard during certain years (from solid line to dash line). The superscripted numbers represent different policies or standards, and the same superscripted number represents the same policies or standards applied in various regions.

Figure 3: Policy evolutions under each emission scenario in the industry sector during 2015-2050. Here industry sector is divided into seven subsectors (i.e. coal-fired boilers, iron and steel plants, cement plants, nonferrous metal, flat glass, brick/lime and other industries, as well as key VOCs-related industries). Policies in each emission source are strengthened in the order of blue, green, orange, and yellow color, and gradient color reflects the transition from one standard to another standard during certain years (from solid/dash line to dash line). The superscripted numbers represent different policies or standards, and the same superscripted number represents the same policies or standards applied in various regions.
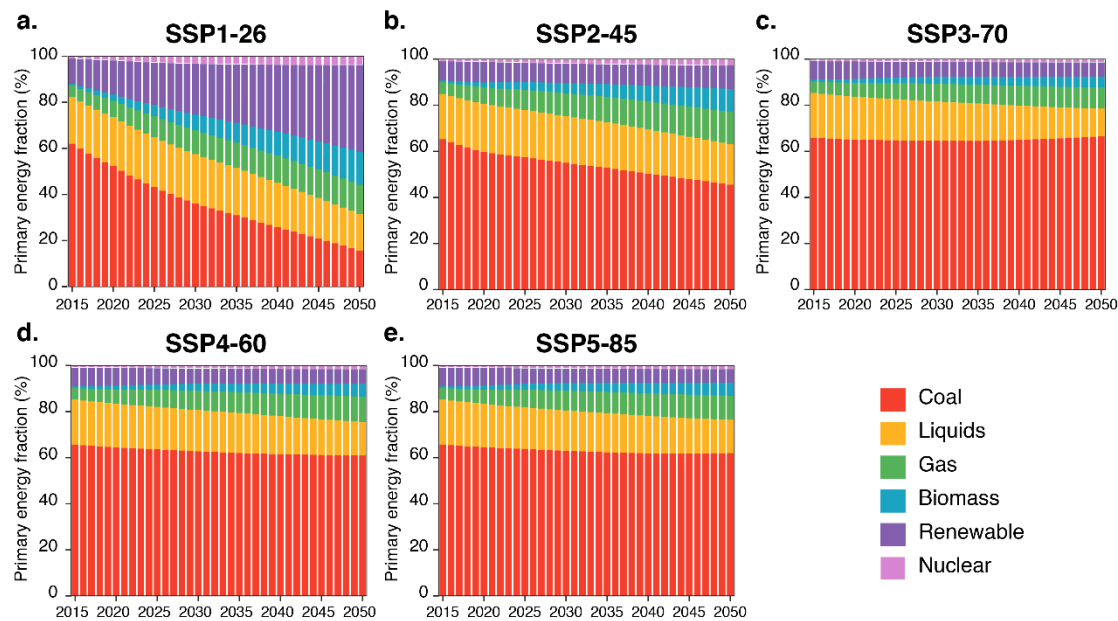
Figure 4: Evolution of primary energy structure under different scenarios. The scenarios plotted here include (a) SSP1-26, (b) SSP2-45, (c) SSP3-70, (d) SSP4-60, (e) SSP5-85 scenarios. This figure shows the yearly changes of primary energy (coal, liquids, gas, biomass, renewable, and nuclear) structure under five combined social-economic-energy scenarios during 2015-2050.
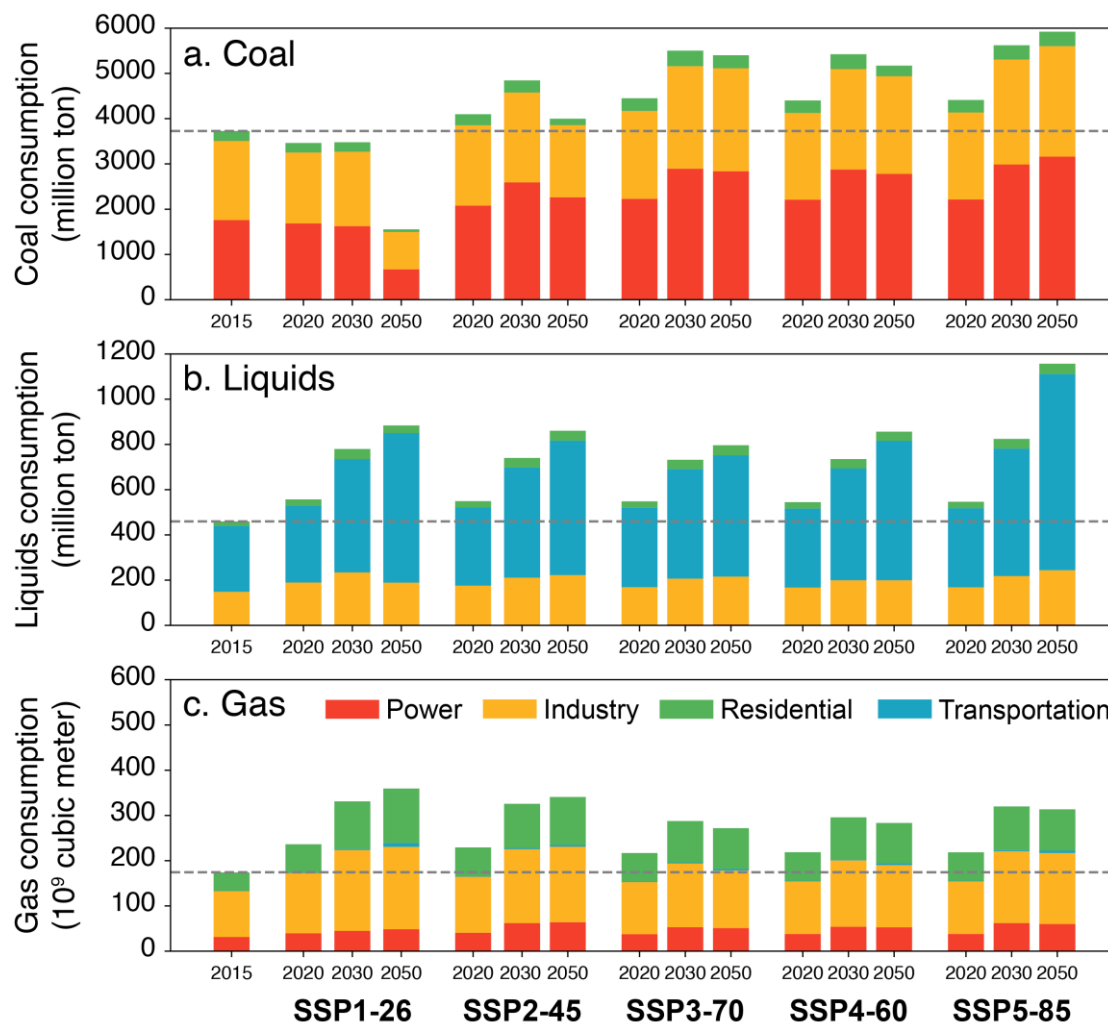
Figure 5: China's future energy consumption in the year of 2030 and 2050 under five energy scenarios. The fuel types plotted here include (a) coal, (b) liquids, and (c) gas. Energy consumptions are divided into four energy-related sectors (stacked column chart): power, industry, residential, and transportation.
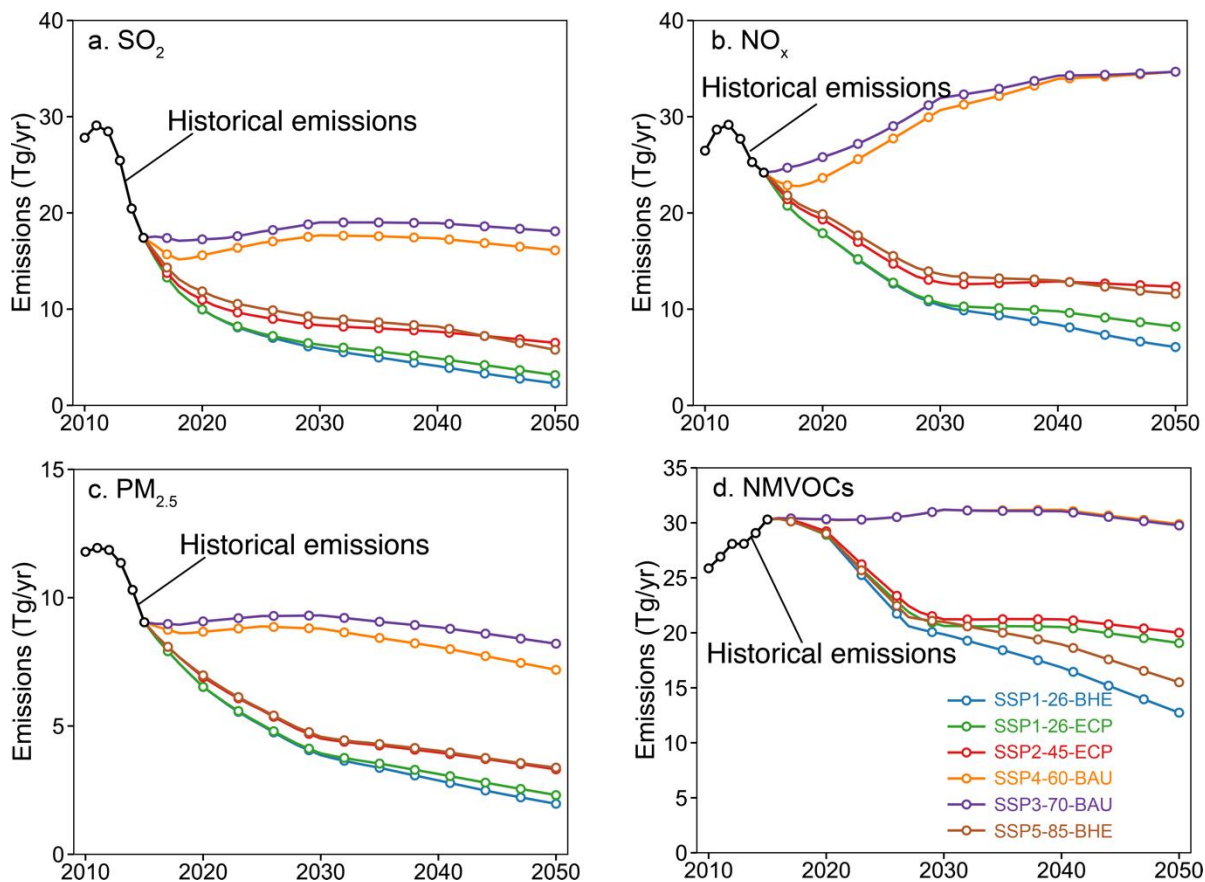
Figure 6: Emissions of major air pollutants in China from 2010 to 2050. The species plotted here include (a) SO_2, (b) NO_x, (c) $PM_{2.5}$, (d) NMVOCs. This figure shows the historical annual emission data from 2010-2015 and emission projections (one dot every three years) under six designed scenarios during 2015-2050 (SSP1-26-ECP, SSP1-26-BHE, SSP2-45-ECP, SSP3-70-BAU, SSP4-60-BAU, and SSP5-85-BHE scenarios).
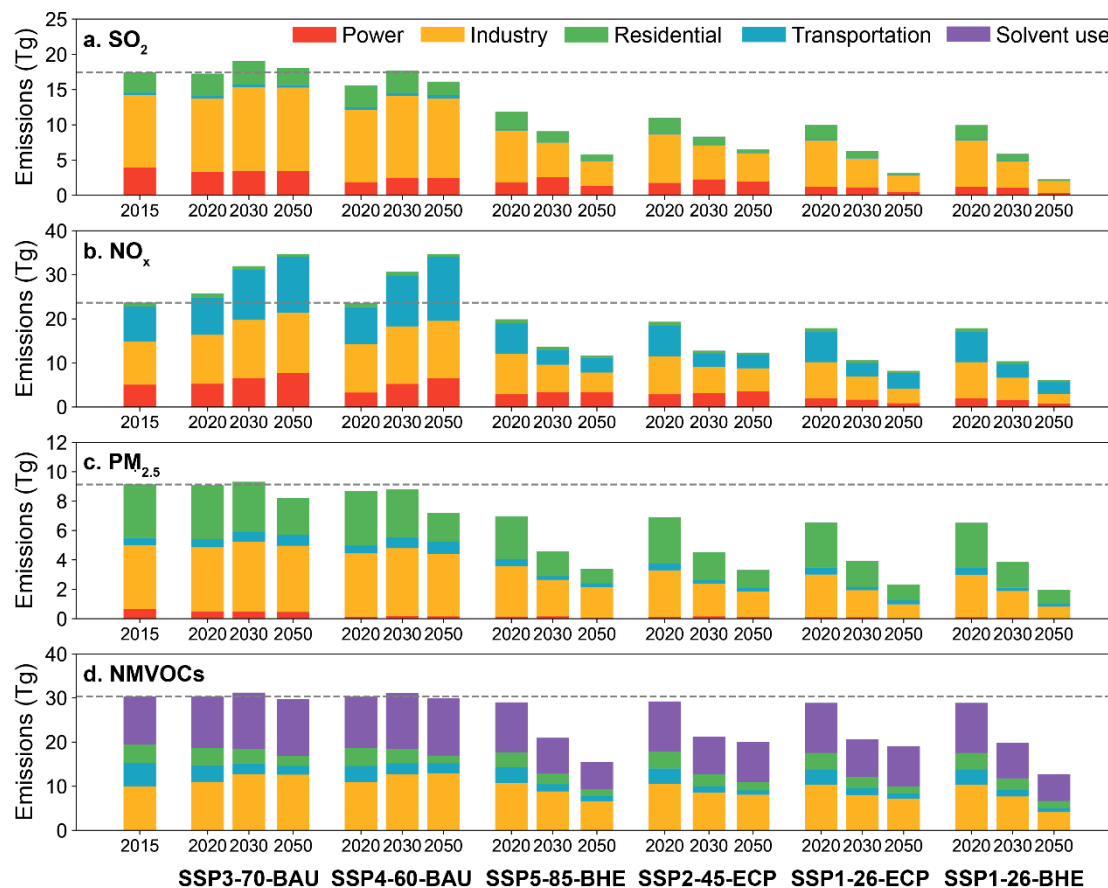
Figure 7: China's future anthropogenic emissions by sector in the year of 2030 and 2050 under six scenarios. The species plotted here include (a) SO_2, (b) NO_x, (c) $PM_{2.5}$, (d) NMVOCs. Emissions are divided into five source sectors (stacked column chart): power, industry, residential, transportation, and solvent use.
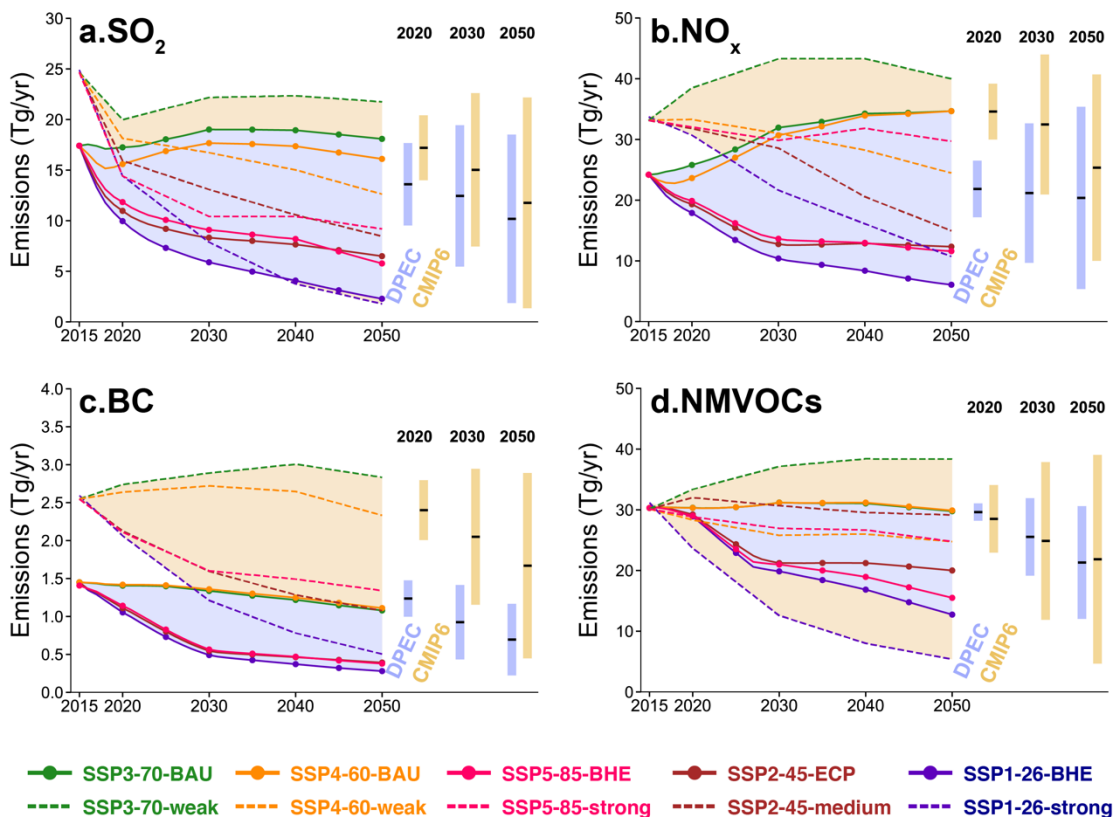
Figure 8: Comparison of future emissions estimated in this study with estimates from CMIP6 database. The species plotted here include (a) SO$_2$, (b) NO$_x$, (c) BC, (d) NMVOCs. The scenario includes SSP1-26-BHE, SSP2-45-ECP-SSP3-70-BAU, SSP4-60-BAU, and SSP5-85-BHE scenarios from this study, and the corresponding SSP1-26-strong, SSP2-45-medium, SSP3-70-weak, SSP4-60-weak, and SSP5-85-strong scenarios from the CMIP6 database.
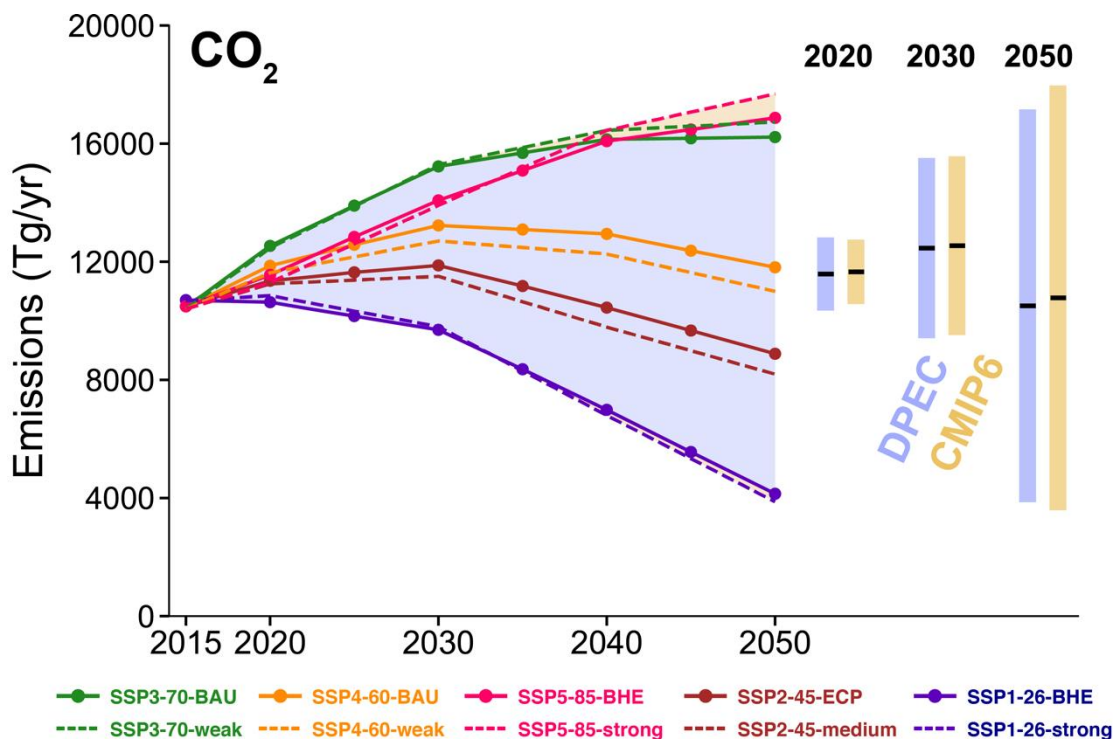
Figure 9: Comparison of future CO₂ emissions estimated in this study with estimates from CMIP6 database. The scenario includes SSP1-26-BHE, SSP2-45-ECP, SSP3-70-BAU, SSP4-60-BAU, and SSP5-85-BHE scenarios from this study, and the corresponding SSP1-26-strong, SSP2-45-medium, SSP3-70-weak, SSP4-60-weak, and SSP5-85-strong scenarios from CMIP6 report.
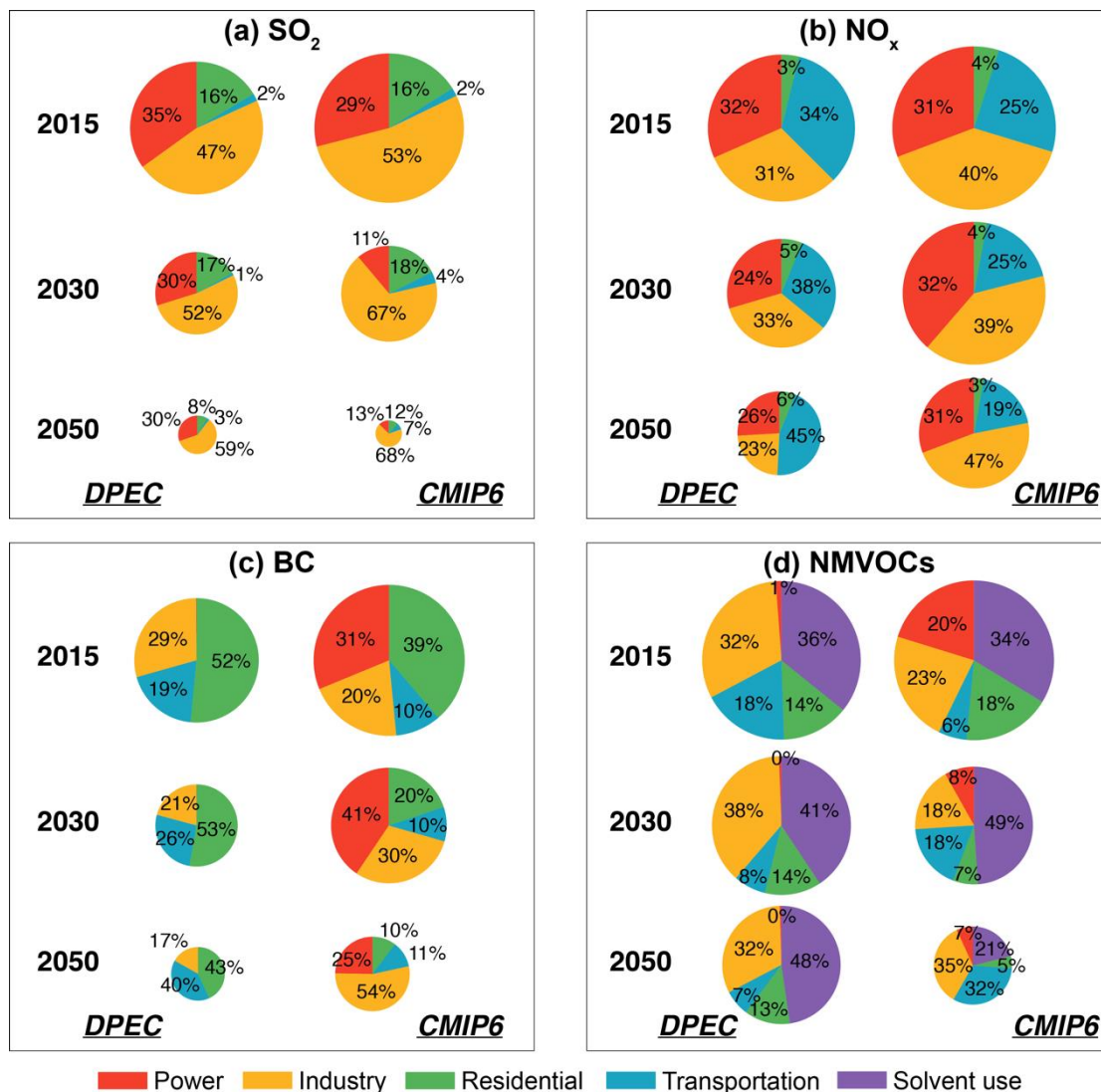
Figure 10: The comparison of sectoral emissions between SSP1-26-BHE scenario from the DPEC model from this study and SSP1-26-strong scenario from the CMIP6 database. (a) SO₂, (b) NOₓ, (c) NMVOCs, and (d) BC emissions. For each pollutant, the relative change in the radius of the pie chart is proportional to the change in emissions.

Table 1: The description of scenarios designed in this study.

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Scenario name	Socioeconomic development	Climate policy	Emission control policy	Scenario definition
SSP1-26-ECP	SSP1	RCP2.6	ECP	Following the heterogeneous and inclusive global developing trends, China would develop sustainably at a reasonably high pace, inequalities are lessened, technological change is rapid and directed toward environmentally friendly processes, including lower carbon energy sources and high productivity of land, under which societal condition the government is committed to achieving the medium-term environmental targets and the modernization goals by 2035. But then, efforts to combat air pollutions would basically remain as 2030 level, and the financial might be invested more in other sustainable development goals, like education and medical.
SSP1-26-BHE	SSP1	RCP2.6	BHE	This scenario shares the same SSP forcing pathway with SSP1-26-ECP. Basing on achieving the medium-term environmental targets and the modernization goals by 2035, the more optimistic long-term environmental policies and investments are further considered, together with the best available technologies are gradually fully applied during 2030-2050, to achieve clean air as in developed countries and maximally protect the human health.
SSP2-45-ECP	SSP2	RCP4.5	ECP	A central pathway in which trends continue their historical patterns without substantial deviations, and China's governments continue making the strict environmental policies in the short- and medium-term.
SSP3-70-BAU	SSP3	RCP7.0	BAU	Inequality and competition among countries would be high and intense. China therefore would develop with a pessimistic trend, and the economic growth would slow down while population increase sharply. To cope with the fierce international competition, little investments would go into education, health or environment protection, which would lead the government is committed to stimulating the economy and climate issue is ignored, meanwhile the environmental control would basically keep as 2015 level.
SSP4-60-BAU	SSP4	RCP6.0	BAU	Inequality remains high and economies are relatively isolated, which leads the development in China proceeds slowly. China is highly vulnerable to climate change with limited adaptive capacity due to limited investments, which also lead to limited actions on climate and environmental issues, therefore, the environmental control would still remain as the 2015 level.
SSP5-85-BHE	SSP5	RCP8.5	BHE	The highest future economic increment will be achieved in China under the rapid global economic growth. To achieve the radical development, climate policies are ignored and high-intensive, fossil-based energy system would be established, with few advanced technology options. Nevertheless, as the rapid economic expanded, the environmental degradation would become more serious, and the government might invest certain finical on consistent air pollution controls. And under the accordant global developing trend, the

manufacture and end-of-pipe control technologies in China would gradually catch up with developed countries.

Table 2: Anthropogenic emissions of air pollutants in 2015, 2030, and 2050 under different scenarios (Unit: Tg·yr⁻¹).

Year	SO₂	NOₓ	NMVOCs	PM₂.₅	PM₁₀	CO	BC	OC	NH₃	CO₂/1000
2015	17.4	23.7	30.3	9.1	23.7	153.6	1.5	2.6	10.5	10.5
SSP5-85-BHE										
2030	9.1	13.6	21.0	4.6	6.2	121.8	0.6	1.2	8.4	14.1
2050	5.8	11.6	15.5	3.4	4.4	122.8	0.4	0.7	6.0	16.9
(2030-2015)/2015	-47.8%	-42.5%	-30.7%	-49.9%	-49.8%	-20.7%	-61.1%	-53.2%	-20.0%	34.2%
(2050-2030)/2030	-36.5%	-14.9%	-26.1%	-26.3%	-29.1%	0.8%	-32.9%	-41.8%	-28.1%	19.8%
(2050-2015)/2015	-66.67%	-51.05%	-48.84%	-62.64%	-81.43%	-20.05%	-73.33%	-73.08%	-42.86%	60.95%
SSP3-70-BAU										
2030	19.0	31.9	31.2	9.3	12.5	159.6	1.4	2.3	10.8	15.2
2050	18.1	34.7	29.8	8.2	11.2	157.1	1.1	1.8	10.0	16.2
(2030-2015)/2015	9.2%	34.8%	3.0%	1.9%	1.8%	3.9%	-6.3%	-9.2%	2.8%	45.2%
(2050-2030)/2030	-4.9%	8.5%	-4.6%	-11.8%	-10.9%	-1.6%	-18.3%	-22.8%	-6.8%	6.5%
(2050-2015)/2015	4.02%	46.41%	-1.65%	-9.89%	-52.74%	2.28%	-26.67%	-30.77%	-4.76%	54.29%
SSP4-60-BAU										
2030	17.7	30.7	31.2	8.8	11.8	155.3	1.3	2.3	10.8	13.2
2050	16.1	34.7	29.9	7.2	9.8	144.4	1.2	1.5	10.0	11.8
(2030-2015)/2015	1.5%	29.4%	2.9%	-3.8%	-3.9%	1.1%	-7.8%	-11.4%	2.8%	26.1%
(2050-2030)/2030	-8.8%	13.0%	-4.1%	-18.2%	-17.3%	-7.0%	-19.2%	-34.5%	-7.1%	-10.7%
(2050-2015)/2015	-7.47%	46.41%	-1.32%	-20.88%	-58.65%	-5.99%	-20.00%	-42.31%	-4.76%	12.38%
SSP2-45-ECP										
2030	8.3	12.8	21.2	4.5	5.9	109.4	0.5	1.3	8.7	11.9
2050	6.5	12.3	20.0	3.3	4.3	107.0	0.4	0.9	7.9	8.9
(2030-2015)/2015	-52.2%	-46.1%	-30.0%	-50.6%	-52.0%	-28.8%	-62.4%	-51.0%	-16.8%	13.2%
(2050-2030)/2030	-22.0%	-3.4%	-5.7%	-26.6%	-27.1%	-2.2%	-28.0%	-31.8%	-9.9%	-25.2%
(2050-2015)/2015	-62.64%	-48.10%	-33.99%	-63.74%	-81.86%	-30.34%	-73.33%	-65.38%	-24.76%	-15.24%
SSP1-26-ECP										
2030	6.3	10.6	20.6	3.9	5.0	91.1	0.5	1.2	8.7	9.7
2050	3.1	8.2	19.1	2.3	2.7	74.4	0.3	0.8	7.9	4.1
(2030-2015)/2015	-63.9%	-55.2%	-31.9%	-56.9%	-59.8%	-40.7%	-65.8%	-54.3%	-16.8%	-9.4%
(2050-2030)/2030	-50.0%	-22.9%	-7.5%	-41.4%	-44.6%	-18.4%	-30.4%	-35.7%	-9.9%	-57.3%
(2050-2015)/2015	-82.18%	-65.40%	-36.96%	-74.73%	-88.61%	-51.56%	-80.00%	-69.23%	-24.76%	-60.95%
SSP1-26-BHE										

2030	5.9	10.4	19.9	3.9	4.9	91.0	0.5	1.2	8.5	9.7
2050	2.3	6.1	12.7	2.0	2.3	69.5	0.3	0.7	6.1	4.1
(2030-2015)/2015	-66.2%	-56.2%	-34.4%	-57.7%	-60.6%	-40.7%	-66.2%	-54.9%	-19.2%	-9.4%
(2050-2030)/2030	-61.2%	-41.6%	-35.9%	-49.0%	-53.0%	-23.6%	-43.0%	-42.7%	-27.9%	-57.3%
(2050-2015)/2015	-86.78%	-74.26%	-58.09%	-78.02%	-90.30%	-54.75%	-80.00%	-73.08%	-41.90%	-60.95%