

Asia's pollution exodus: Firms struggle to woo top talent

Notes & Cues:**Article:**

From smog breaks to pollution bonuses, Asia's businesses are promising increasingly inventive perks in a desperate bid to lure executives to a region where toxic air engulfs major cities for much of the year.

Health concerns are putting off those initially attracted by Asia's growing economic opportunities, experts warn, so firms are struggling to recruit — and retain — people with the expertise they need.

According to the United Nations Environment Programme, some 92 percent of people in the Asia-Pacific region are exposed to levels of air pollution that pose a significant risk to health.

This means that on top of large salaries, businesses are having to offer extra incentives. These include paying for smog breaks every few months, or allowing non-traditional working arrangements so people can commute from less polluted areas, says Lee Quane, Asia director for consultancy ECA International.

At "a location with a higher level of pollution, you're likely to see us recommend allowances of anywhere between 10 to 20 percent of the person's base salary, " he says.

This estimate, derived from a rating system his firm uses to help companies decide appropriate financial compensation for relocation, would also incorporate factors such as crime rates and access to services, he adds.

India has one of the world's fastest growing economies, making it an appealing career option, but it is also home to seven of the most polluted cities, according to a recent report by Greenpeace and IQ Air Visual.

"All senior executives want to have India experience on their CVs. There is however, a fear of pollution related health issues, " says Atul Vohra, managing partner of Transearch, a global recruitment firm.

Summary: