

Relationships between road transport emissions and particulate matter ambient concentrations in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region during 2007-2018

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Abstract: Bangkok Metropolitan Region (BMR), one of the top world's most congested megacities, has been facing air quality problems due to incidences of particulate matter especially during the dry seasons during the past few years. To evaluate the contribution of road transport emissions on air quality in BMR, this study investigated the relationships between PM10 and PM2.5 emissions from road transport and their ambient concentrations during 2007-2018 by the linear regression model. The emissions and ambient concentrations analysis to prepare inputs for investigating their correlations showed an emission reduction of 7.96 kt equivalent to 75% from 2007 to 2018 for PM10, and 3.87 kt or about 43% for PM2.5, respectively. For the ambient air concentrations, there was a decrease of 18 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (31%) for PM10 and 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (28%) for PM2.5, respectively. For both PM10 and PM2.5, the correlation between emissions and ambient concentrations was significant for the overall fleet exhaust emission, and especially from diesel vehicles, while an insignificant linear relationship was observed for the case of emissions from gasoline vehicles. Using the resulting linear regression model coefficients, it was estimated that an emission reduction of 1 kt of PM10 will contribute to an approximate decrease of 1.31 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ of ambient PM10, and 1.26 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in the case of PM2.5, respectively. Results from this study suggest reducing the timeframe of emission estimation from road transport, from annually to monthly or daily basis in order to improve the accuracy and precision of the emission-to-ambient concentration conversion factors.

Keywords: PM10, PM2.5, Road transport, Air quality, Bangkok Metropolitan Region (BMR).

1. Introduction

Air quality is becoming a global challenge, especially in high-density urban areas. In the 2019 Global Burden of Disease study [1], air pollution was ranked as the fourth largest risk factor for premature mortality. Also, it was found that one of the most significant increases in risk exposures was ambient particulate matter (PM) pollution. The study showed that exposures increased globally by 1.46% per year over the past decade, and large annual increases, nearly 3.8-4.0% in low- and middle-income countries.

According to the Air Quality Life Index Report-2020 [2], Thailand is one of the most polluted countries in Southeast Asia and ranked among the Top 10 most polluted countries worldwide. The annual average of particulate matter with a diameter lesser than 2.5-micron (PM2.5) reached 23.8 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in 2020, corresponding to about 5 times higher than the World Health Organization (WHO) air quality guideline level of 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, and hence could contribute to shortening the average Thai resident's life expectancy by 1.8 years relative to what it would be if the WHO guideline were met. In addition, it was found that overall air pollution in Thailand has increased by about 23% since 2000 and that the health burden of air pollution was the highest in Bangkok, Nakhon Ratchasima, and Chiang Mai. This results in an estimate of the year of life loss (YLL) of 4.1 to 13.9 million total life years, and the average gain in life expectancy from clean air ranging from 1.5 to 2.4 years.

Regarding Bangkok and the five adjacent provinces that form the BMR, i.e. Nakhon Pathom, Pathum Thani, Nonthaburi, Samut Prakan, and Samut Sakhon, Thailand's Annual Report of the Environment indicates that air quality in BMR has been beyond

the standard especially due to an incidence of particulate matter, and that road transport constitutes one of the major sources of air pollutants in this region [3]. Also, road transport activities are well recognized to be dense with high exhaust emissions, as reported by the INRIX Global Traffic Scorecard showing that Thailand was the top world's most congested country, and Bangkok was the twelfth city in the world with high traffic congestion in 2017 [4]. Air pollutants emissions from road transport are acknowledged to significantly contribute to the smog haze formation with high ambient particulates and ozone concentrations, especially in megacities [5-10]. Major air pollutants emissions from road traffic include nitrogen oxides (NO_x), carbon monoxide (CO), hydrocarbon (HC), particulate matter (PM), and others [11-12]. Road transport has significantly contributed to the emission of atmospheric pollutants in Bangkok, with consequent problems for the environment and human health [13-14]. Exposure to air pollutants is a concern in urban areas because of the high population density exposed to air pollution and the high number of emission sources with suspected harmful effects on human health [15].

This study aims to investigate the relationship between emissions from road transport and ambient particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5) concentrations during 2007-2018, to evaluate the contribution of this emission source to air quality in BMR. Emissions and air quality monitoring used for the investigation are first described and analyzed. Correlations between emissions and ambient PM2.5 or PM10 are discussed and commented on. The results from this study are expected to contribute to/support the development of policy recommendations for the attainment of air quality in BMR by reducing air pollutants emissions from

road transport, which would also help the BMR to go towards the national targets on carbon neutrality by 2050 and net zero emission by 2065.

2. Methodology

2.1 Road transport emission estimation data

The emission estimation method and data used in this study were from the research work developed by Cheewaphongphan et al. [16] in 2017. On-road vehicles were classified into four types, motorcycles (MC); light-duty vehicles (LDV) which include light-duty cars (LDC) and light-duty trucks (LDT); and heavy-duty vehicles (HDV) which involve heavy-duty bus (HDB) and heavy-duty truck (HDT). They were also specified by fuel types including gasoline (GSL) and middle distillates (MD), more commonly named diesel.

2.2 Air particulate matter monitoring data

The ambient particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5) concentrations data during the period of 2007-2018 were collected from 21 air quality monitoring stations located in BMR and operated by the Pollution Control Department (PCD). There are 7 ambient air monitoring stations in Bangkok and 10 in the adjacent provinces within BMR. In addition, 4 roadside stations were set up in Bangkok. Detailed ID and name of these stations are reported in Table 1. The spatial distribution of air quality monitoring stations in BMR is mapped in Figure 1. The measurement methods used at each air quality monitoring station are summarized in Table 2.

Table 1. Name and ID of air quality monitoring stations in BMR.

Province	Type	ID	Name
Bangkok	Ambient station	02T	Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhata
		05T	Thailand Meteorological Department
		10T	Klongjun NHA
		11T	Huaykwang NHA Stadium
		12T	Nonsi wittaya school
		59T	Public Relations Department
		61T	Badindecha School
	Roadside station	50T	Chulalongkorn Hospital
		52T	Thonburi Power Substation
		53T	Chokchai 4 Police Station
		54T	Dindang NHA
Samut Prakan	Ambient station	08T	Prapradang Rehabilitation for the Disabled
		16T	South Bangkok Thermal Power Plants
		17T	Residence for Department of Primary Industries and Mines
		18T	Samut Prakan City Hall
		19T	Bangplee NHA
Pathum Thani		20T	Bangkok University
Samut Sakhon		14T	Samut sakhon Highway District
		27T	Samut sakhon Wittayalai School
Nonthaburi		13T	Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand
		22T	Sukhothai Thammathirat University

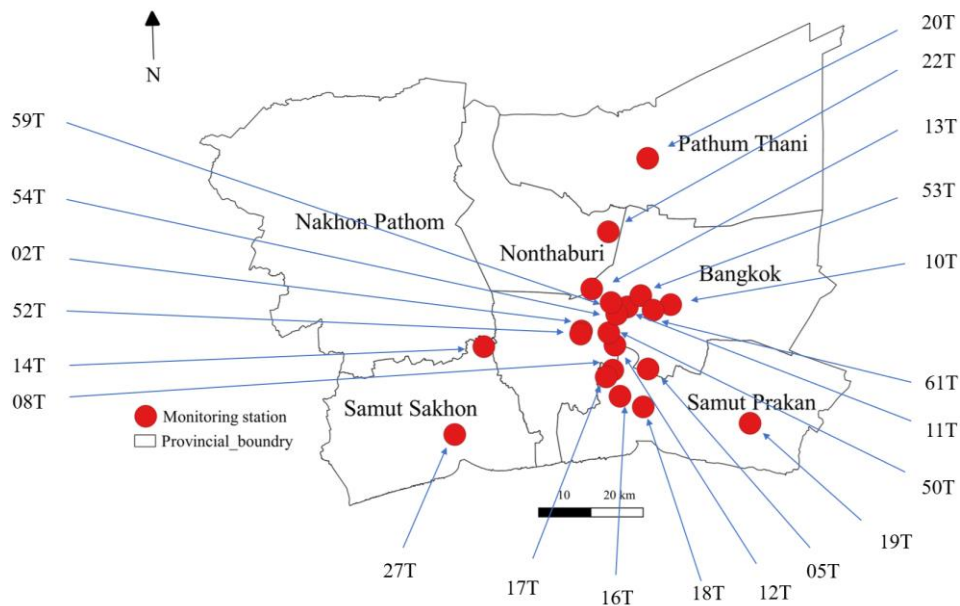


Figure 1. Spatial distribution of air quality monitoring stations in BMR.

Table 2. Measurement methods used at air quality monitoring stations in BMR

Air quality	Methodology	Height	Detection Range
PM2.5, PM10	Beta-ray method	3 m	0–1000 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$
CO	Non-Dispersive Infrared Detection	3 m	0–50 ppm
SO ₂	UV-Fluorescence	3 m	0–500 ppb
NO, NO ₂ , NO _x	Chemiluminescence	3 m	0–500 ppb
Relative Humidity	Thin Film Polymer Capacitor	3 m	0–100 %RH
Temperature	Multistage solid state thermistor, highly linearized	3 m	(–50)–50 °C
Wind Direction	Wind Vane	10 m	0–360 deg
Wind Speed	Cup propeller	10 m	0–50 m/s
Rain	Tipping Bucket	3 m	mm/h

2.3 Analysis of the relationship between total PM emission from road transport and PM ambient concentrations in BMR during 2007-2018

In this study, we applied the linear regression method to investigate the relationship of particulate matter emission from road transport with the ambient particulate matter concentration. The linear regression model used is formulated by Equation 1.

$$Y = \alpha_1(X) + \alpha_0 \quad (1)$$

Where,

$Y = PM \text{ Ambient concentration}$

$X = PM \text{ emission from on-road transport}$

$\alpha_0 = Y - \text{Intercept}$

$\alpha_1 = \text{slope of regression line}$

The degree of association between the road transport emissions and ambient concentrations of particulate matter, namely correlation coefficient and denoted R was also calculated. The coefficient of correlation R varies between -1 and +1, and the closer to 1 is the R^2 value, the stronger is the correlation.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1 Emissions of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} from road transport in 2007-2018

The PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} emissions from road transport in 2007-2018 are reported in Figures 2 and 3, respectively. From these Figures, the heavy-duty trucks fueled with diesel (HDTMD) were the top emitter of both PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}, followed by light-duty trucks fueled with diesel (LDTMD), heavy-duty buses fueled with diesel (HDBMD), and light-duty cars fueled with diesel (LDCMD). The road transport emissions of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} showed an observable decreasing trend during 2007-2018, from about 10.5 kt in 2007 to 2.5 kt in 2018 for PM₁₀, and from about 10.5 kt in 2007 to 5.5 kt in 2018 for PM_{2.5}, respectively. The observed significant drops could be associated with the changes in the vehicle exhaust emission standards in application in Thailand shown in Table 3. Moreover, the particulate matter emissions showed a substantial diminution with the implementation of the sulfur content in fuel reduction measures. Indeed, a noteworthy decrease was observed after 2012 when the sulfur content passed from 350 ppm to 50 ppm with the putting into force of the Euro 4 for light-duty vehicles.

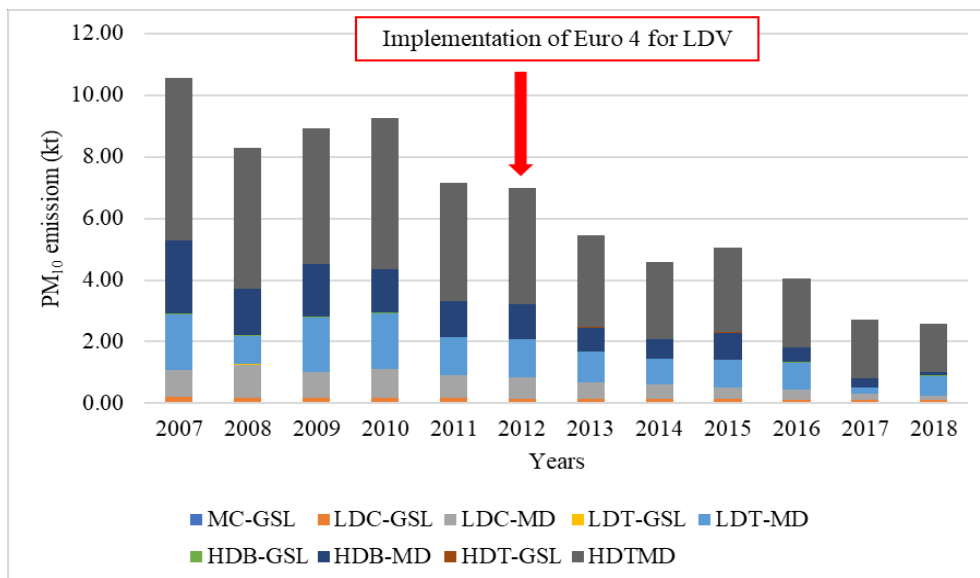


Figure 2. PM₁₀ emission from road transport in BMR in 2007-2018.

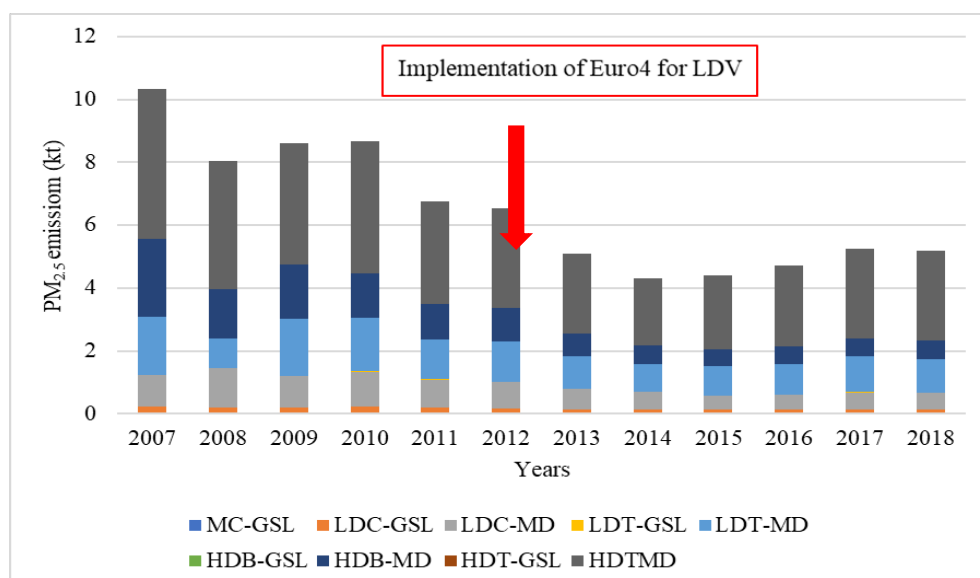
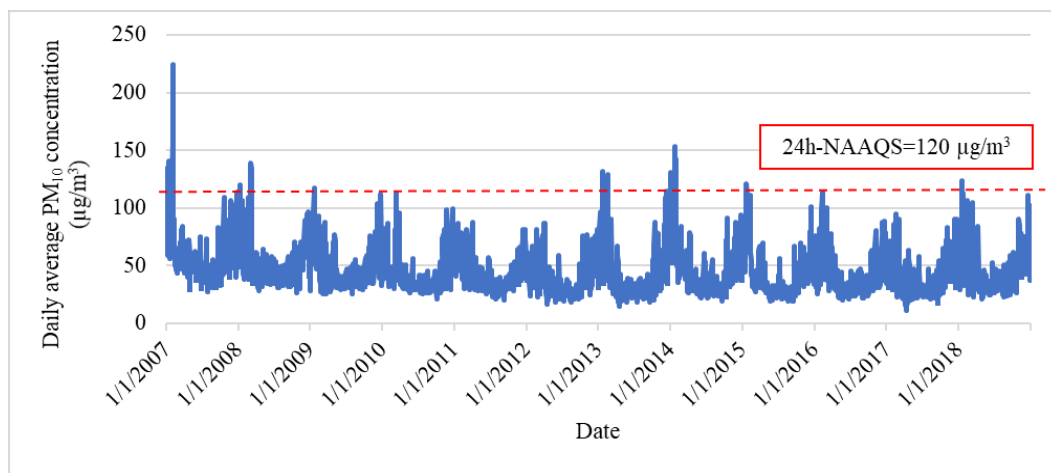
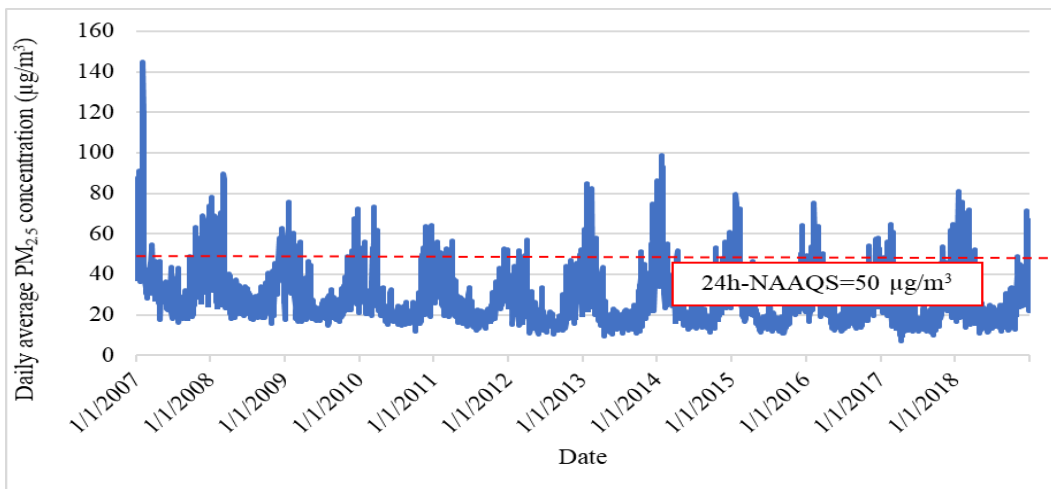


Figure 3. PM_{2.5} emissions from road transport in BMR in 2007-2018.

Table 3. Thailand's vehicle exhaust emission standards

Vehicle type	Reference Standard (Euro Standard) Enforcement																						
	Before 1995	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015 - Present	
LDC	Pre-Euro			Euro I			Euro II					Euro III					Euro IV						
HDV	Pre-Euro				Euro I	Euro II							Euro III										
MC	ECE 40-00	ECE 40-01	CO ≤ 13 g/km HC ≤ 5 g/km			CO ≤ 4.5 g/km HC+NOx ≤ 3 g/km White Smoke ≤ 30% Evaporative ≤ 2 g/test (for < 110cc.)					CO ≤ 3.5 gm/km HC+ NOx ≤ 2 g/km White Smoke ≤ 15% Evaporative ≤ 2 g/test (for ≥ 150cc.)					Euro III							

**Figure 4.** Daily average ambient PM₁₀ concentrations in BMR in 2007-2018.**Figure 5.** Daily average ambient PM_{2.5} concentrations in 2007-2018.

3.2 Ambient particulate matter concentrations in BMR in 2007-2018

The particulate matter 24h-average concentrations variation from 2007-2018 is shown in Figures 4 and 5. Similar time-series profiles were observed for PM₁₀ (Figure 4) and PM_{2.5} (Figure 5). The high concentrations were found during the dry season (November to April) with the peak period in January to March, while low values were detected during the rainy season (May to October). Table 4 compares the Thai national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) with the WHO air quality guideline (AQG) level. The comparison indicates that the NAAQS values are significantly higher than WHO-AQG levels, and the air quality complying with NAAQS still presents some health risks for the exposed population. From Figures 4 and 5, the daily average of

ambient PM_{2.5} concentrations showed exceedances compared to the 24h-national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) during the peak periods for all years during 2007-2018, while PM₁₀ exceeded the standard values in some years only. In addition, slight exceeding values were observed for PM₁₀, and significant differences compared to the national standards for PM_{2.5} were found.

Figures 6 and 7 show the boxplots of the annual averages of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} concentrations in 2007-2018, respectively. As for the daily averages, slight exceeding values compared to the national ambient air quality standards were observed in some years for PM₁₀, while large exceedances were detected for PM_{2.5}.

We also investigated the ambient particulate matter spatial variation to identify the areas where exposure may induce more

severe health impacts. Maps of ambient PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} annual average concentration in 2007-2018 are displayed in Figures 8 and 9, respectively. For PM₁₀, high concentrations were at the air quality monitoring stations in Bangkok's central and southern areas. The number of stations without exceedance increased from 2007 to 2018 in Bangkok and adjacent provinces included in BMR. This result showed air quality improvements in BMR in terms of PM₁₀.

Regarding PM_{2.5}, it should be noted that their monitoring started only in 2011, and therefore, we had to estimate their daily average concentrations for all the air quality monitoring stations

whenever no measurement data were available, using PM₁₀ air quality monitoring data and the PM_{2.5}/PM₁₀ ratio obtained by Pengjan et al. [17]. Comparing Figures 8 and 9, it was found that high PM_{2.5} concentrations were observed in the same areas as those of PM₁₀. However, there were more stations with exceedances than those that complied with the national standards, and large exceedances were found in Bangkok in 2007, 2014, and 2016. For other provinces in BMR, only one exceedance in Samut Sakhon was observed for PM₁₀, while several ones of annual average PM_{2.5} concentrations were detected in Pathum Thani, Samut Sakhon and Samut Prakarn, over the period of 2007-2018.

Table 4. Comparison of the Thai national ambient air quality standards and WHO air quality guideline level for PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}.

	AQ Annual Standard ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)		24-hr. Standard ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	
	PM ₁₀	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	PM _{2.5}
WHO Air Quality Guideline (AQG) Level	15	5	45	15
Thailand (TH) National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)	50	25	120	50

Note: The Thai NAAQS for PM_{2.5} officially entered into application in 2010

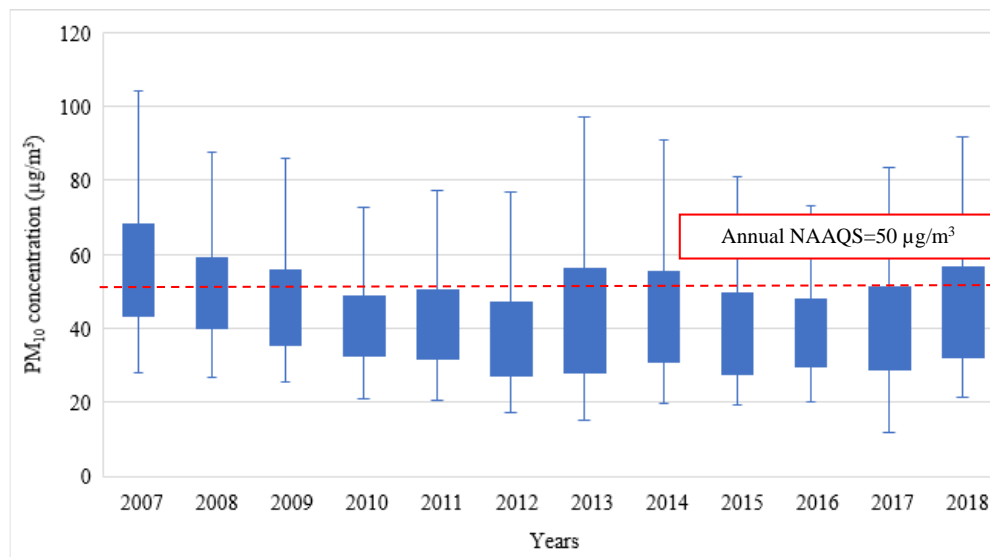


Figure 6. Boxplots of the annual average of ambient PM₁₀ concentrations in BMR during 2007-2018.

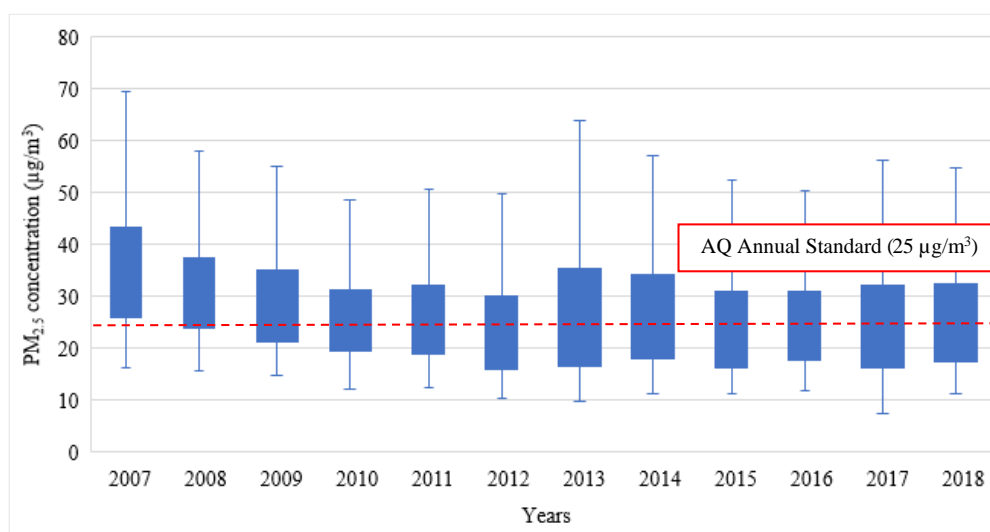


Figure 7. Boxplots of the annual average of ambient PM_{2.5} concentrations in BMR during 2007-2018.

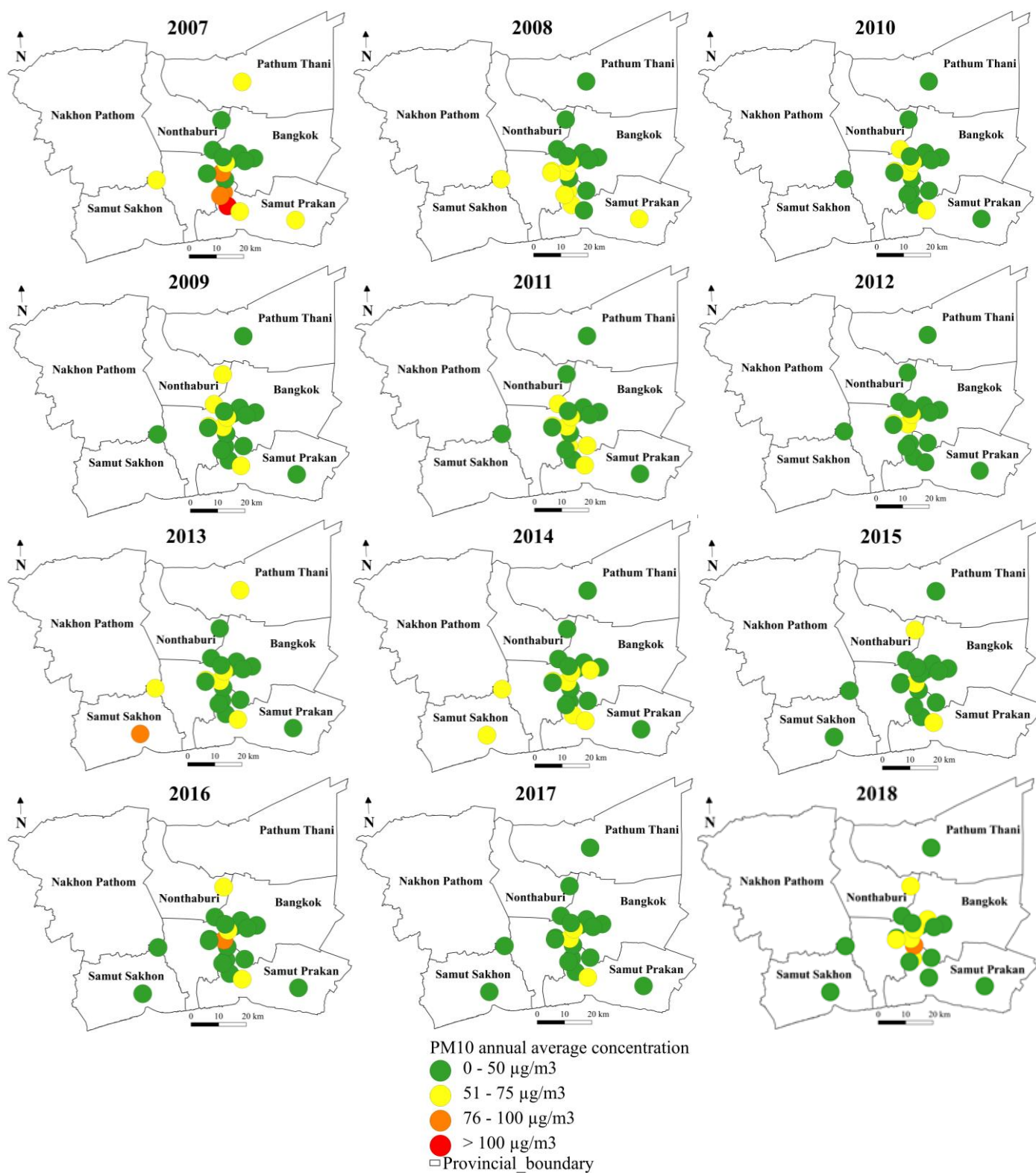


Figure 8. Map of PM₁₀ annual average concentration in BMR during 2007-2018.

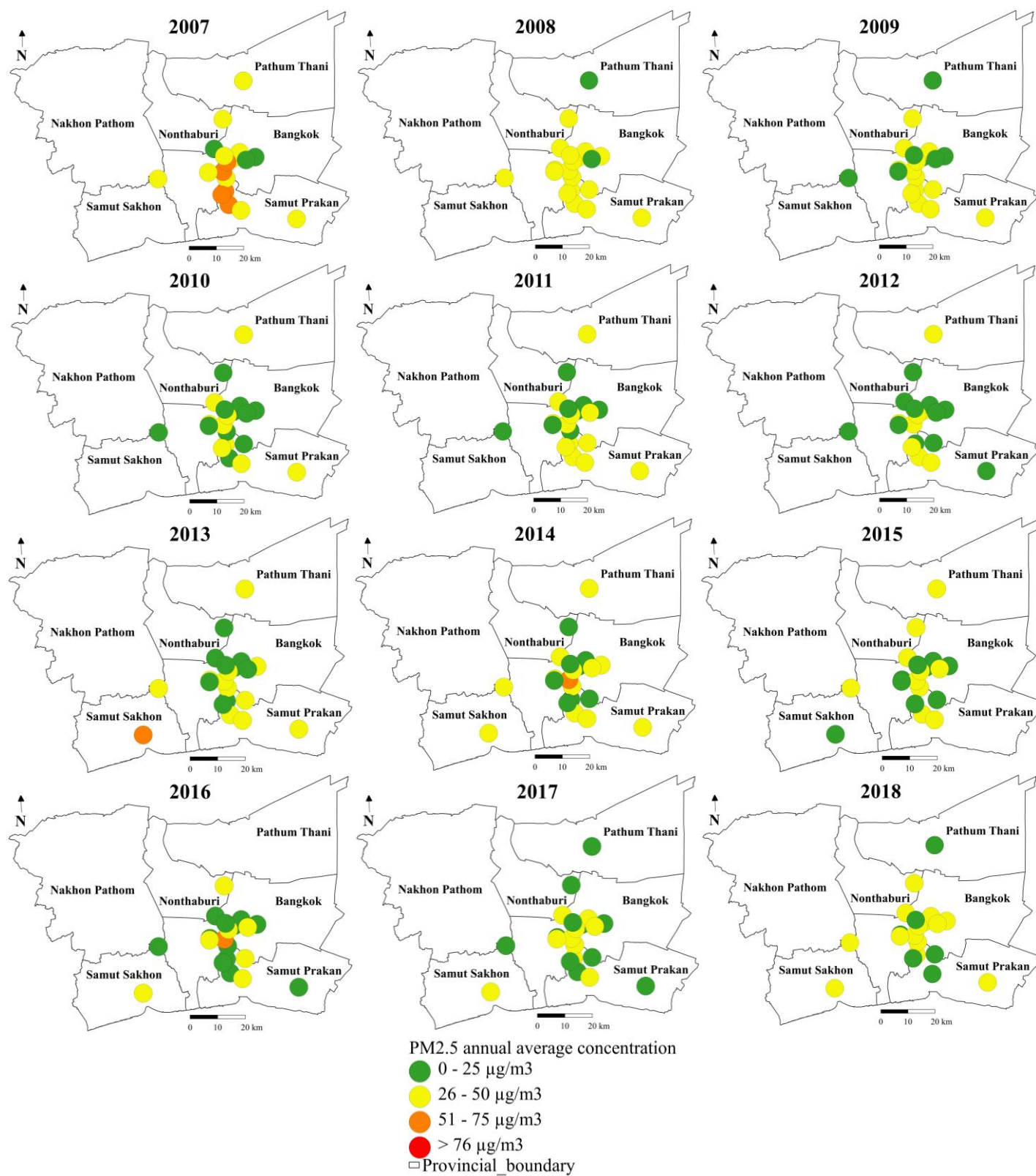


Figure 9. Map of PM_{2.5} annual average concentration in BMR during 2007-2018.

3.3 Relationships between total PM emission from road transport and ambient PM concentrations in BMR during 2007-2018

The detailed analysis of the air quality monitoring data revealed that a linear correlation exists only for ambient air particulate matter and total particles emitted from vehicles fueled with diesel, and it was found a stronger correlation between ambient concentrations monitored at roadside stations than ambient air stations. The investigation results of the relationships between total PM₁₀ emissions from road transport vehicles fueled with diesel and ambient PM₁₀ concentrations in BMR during 2007-2018 are displayed in Figures 10-12. Based on the correlation

coefficient values (R^2), the strongest relationship was observed for emission from heavy-duty vehicles ($R^2=0.31$), followed by all type vehicles ($R^2=0.27$), and light-duty vehicles ($R^2=0.18$), respectively. For PM_{2.5}, the obtained results are reported in Figures 13-15, and show a stronger correlation between PM_{2.5} emissions and ambient concentrations comparatively to the case of PM₁₀. Again the correlation found for PM_{2.5} emitted from heavy-duty vehicles fueled with diesel ($R^2=0.54$) revealed to be the strongest, followed by all type vehicles ($R^2=0.46$), and light-duty vehicles ($R^2=0.26$), respectively.

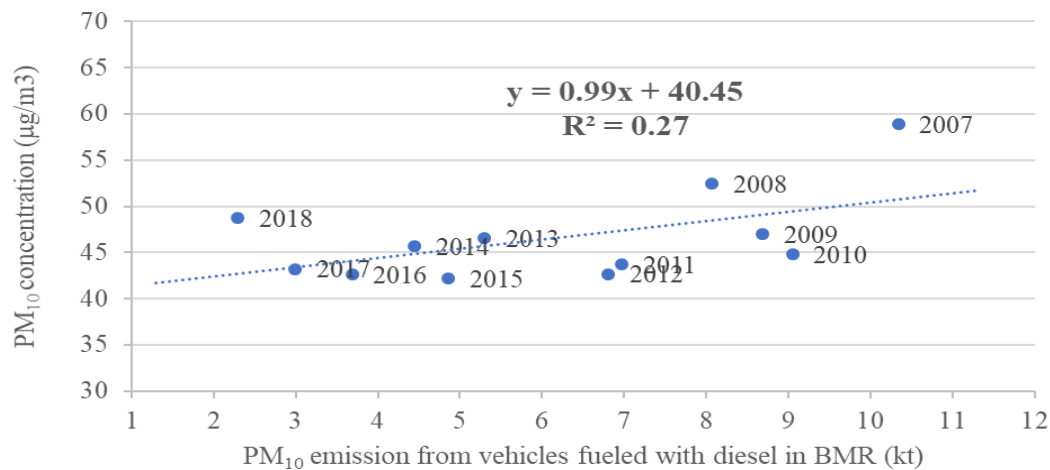


Figure 10. Relationship between PM₁₀ emissions from all type vehicles fueled with diesel and ambient PM₁₀ concentration in BMR during 2007-2018.

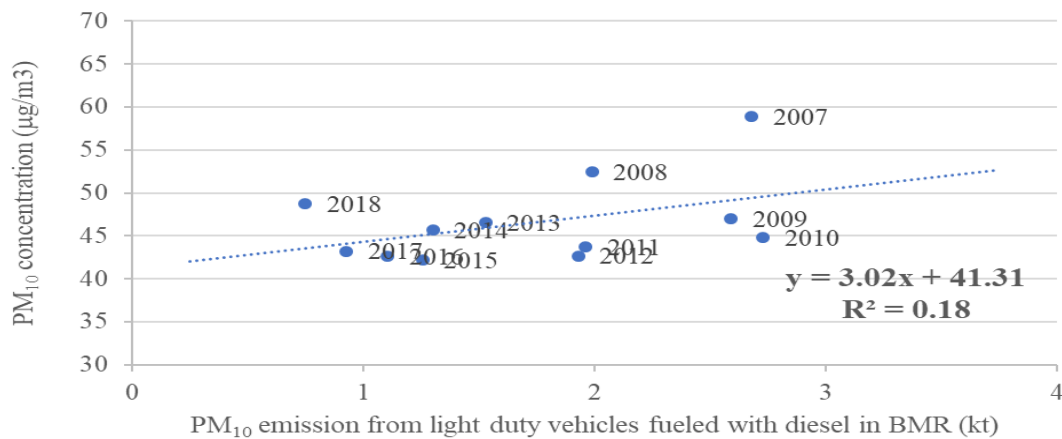


Figure 11. Relationship between PM₁₀ emissions from light-duty vehicles fueled with diesel and ambient PM₁₀ concentration in BMR during 2007-2018.

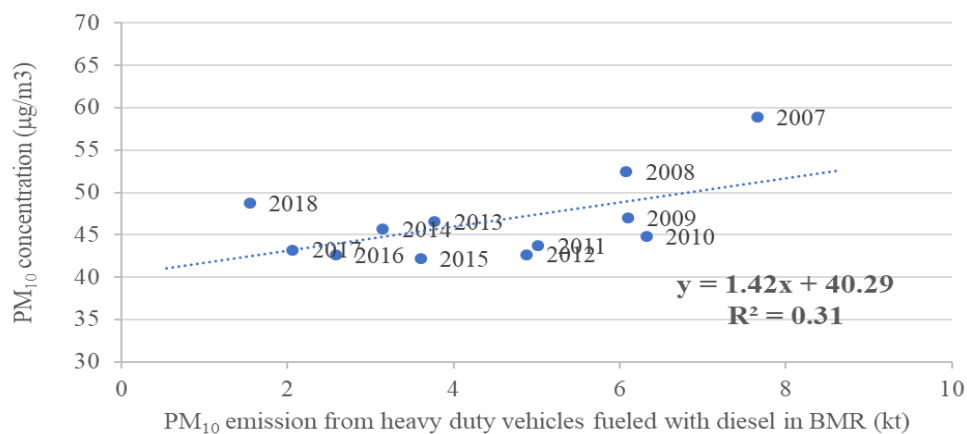


Figure 12. Relationship between PM₁₀ emissions from heavy-duty vehicles fueled with diesel and ambient PM₁₀ concentration in BMR during 2007-2018.

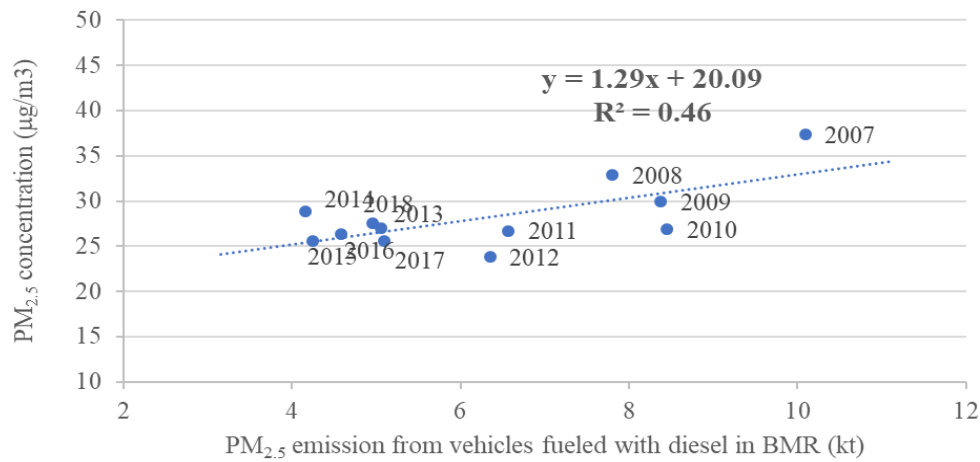


Figure 13. Relationship between PM_{2.5} emissions from all type vehicles fueled with diesel and ambient PM_{2.5} concentrations in BMR during 2007-2018.

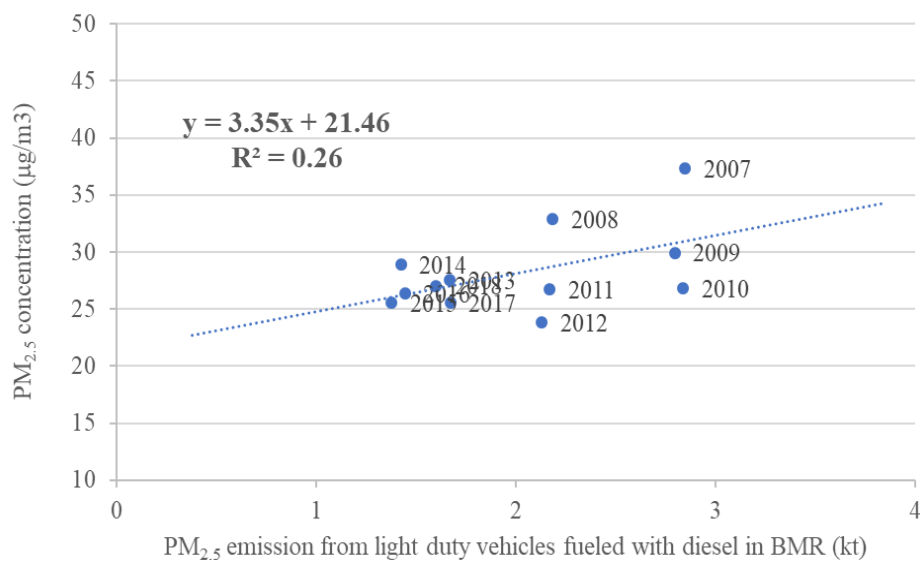


Figure 14. Relationship between PM_{2.5} emissions from light-duty vehicles fueled with diesel and ambient PM_{2.5} concentrations in BMR during 2007-2018.

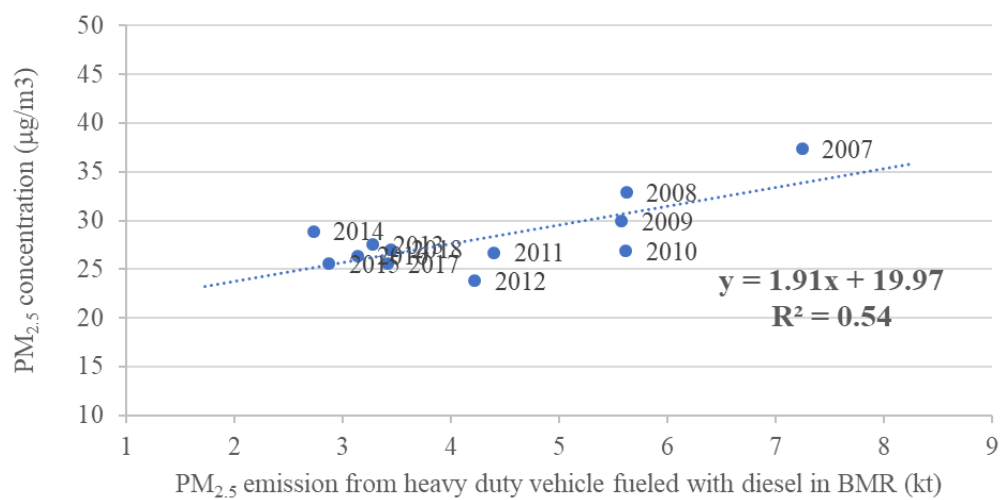


Figure 15. Relationship between PM_{2.5} emissions from heavy-duty vehicles fueled with diesel and ambient PM_{2.5} concentrations in BMR during 2007-2018.

Table 5. Summary of the resulted linear regression models to convert particulate emission from road transport vehicles into ambient particulate matter concentrations in BMR during 2007-2018.

PM type	Air quality monitoring station type	Emission range (kt)	Concentration range ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	Intercept (α_0)	Slope (α_1)	Correlation coefficient (R^2)
PM ₁₀	All station	3 - 11	40 - 60	37.91	1.31	0.39
	Ambient stations	3 - 11	35 - 60	35.94	1.23	0.27
	Roadside stations	3 - 11	40 - 65	44.96	1.49	0.39
PM _{2.5}	All station	4 - 11	20 - 40	19.98	1.26	0.46
	Ambient stations	4 - 11	20 - 40	20.22	1.05	0.36
	Roadside stations	4 - 11	20 - 45	20.46	1.86	0.47

From the obtained results, it was found that heavy-duty vehicles constitute one of the main contributor to ambient air particulate matter in BMR, especially PM_{2.5}. This can be partly explained by the fact that the exhaust emission standard was revised only for light-duty vehicles, passing from the Euro 3 to Euro 4 standard in 2011. Nevertheless, the upgrade fuel quality, from 350 ppm to 50 ppm sulfur content, to meet the requirements of Euro 4 standard vehicles enabled to reduce the particulate exhaust emissions from heavy-duty vehicles and, consequently, ambient air particulate matter concentrations, for both PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}. To mitigate air pollution by PM_{2.5} to BMR, it is therefore recommended to upgrade the exhaust emission standard for heavy-duty at the same time as that for light-duty vehicles.

The resulted linear regression models to convert particulate emission from road transport vehicles into ambient particulate matter concentrations in BMR during 2007-2018, for both PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} classified by type of air quality monitoring station, are summarized in Table 5. Based on the models obtained for all stations, it was found that an emission reduction of 1 kt of PM₁₀ will approximately contribute to a decrease of 1.31 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ of ambient PM₁₀, and 1.26 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in the case of PM_{2.5}, respectively. The linear regression models, obtained in this study, enable to approximate ambient particulate matter concentrations from the total exhaust emission from vehicles, and may therefore be used to evaluate the emission reduction from road transport measures effectiveness in terms of air quality improvement and to prioritize actions to implement.

4. Conclusion

This study investigated the relationships between PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} emissions from road transport and their ambient concentrations in BMR during 2007-2018 by the linear regression model. The emissions and ambient concentrations analysis to prepare inputs for investigating their correlations showed an emission reduction of 7.96 kt equivalent to 75% from 2007 to 2018 for PM₁₀, and 3.87 kt or about 43% for PM_{2.5}, respectively. For the ambient air concentrations, there was a decrease of 18 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (31%) for PM₁₀ and 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (28%) for PM_{2.5}, respectively.

For both PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}, the correlation between emissions and ambient concentrations was significant for the overall fleet exhaust emission, and especially from diesel vehicles, while an insignificant linear relationship was observed for the case of emissions from gasoline vehicles. Based on the linear regression models obtained using the annual overall emissions from road transport and ambient concentrations integrated from all air quality monitoring stations in BMR for the period of 2007-2018, it was found an emission reduction of 1 kt of PM₁₀

will contribute to an approximate decrease of 1.31 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ of ambient PM₁₀, and 1.26 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in the case of PM_{2.5}, respectively. These emission-ambient concentration conversion factors obtained in this study may be used to evaluate how effective the emission reduction from road transport is on air quality improvement in terms of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} concentrations.

To improve the accuracy and precision of the factors for converting emissions into ambient concentrations, the results of this study suggest reducing the periodicity of emission estimation, by moving from the annual estimate to a daily or at least monthly estimate. emissions of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} of road origin. transport vehicles to BMR.

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