

## **Fifth APN Scientific Planning Group Meeting**

26-27 March 2000, Islamabad, Pakistan

### **Summary Report from Co-Chairpersons Prof. Zongci Zhao and Prof. Keiji Higuchi.**

The Meeting was attended by representatives from Australia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Philippines, Russia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, USA, START Oceania, SASCOM, TEACOM, and the International START Secretariat and by observers from Pakistan. A list of participants is given in [Attachment II](#).

#### **1. Opening**

Mr. Hiroaki Takagi made opening statement as Director of the APN Secretariat. Welcoming remarks were given by Dr. Khalid Mehmood Khan, Chairman of the Pakistan Science Foundation.

#### **2. Adoption of Agenda**

The agenda was adopted as proposed and is included as Attachment I.

#### **3. Review of Activities in 1999/2000**

The APN Secretariat gave a review of the year's achievements. During the year the Secretariat had relocated from Tokyo to Kobe with the support of Hyogo Prefecture. The first full-time Director was also appointed and the number of staff increased. APN outputs had also increased with a record number of projects supported; the first APN Symposium and Scoping Workshops successfully held; and positive developments in terms of membership inquiries, communications and the appointment of two new APN Liaison Officers for Southeast Asia and Oceania.

A summary of the 1999/2000 sponsored projects was distributed in a revised format. This was welcomed by SPG members who recommended that this document be widely circulated as a good means of advertising the work of the APN. The Secretariat undertook to distribute more copies to APN members and to put the reports on the APN Homepage. The APN Liaison Officer reports were also distributed.

#### **4. 2000/1 APN Funded Activities**

The Director announced that with increases in support from Japan and a new contribution from Australia, the total budget available for APN funded activities would be approximately US\$1.3 million in the next fiscal year, which means a 20 % increase. In accordance with the APN Strategic Plan, not all of these funds would be spent on projects selected through the Call for Proposals. Instead, some funds would be used to support the outputs of last year's Scoping Workshops.

With regard to the selection of project proposals Prof. Zhao introduced the role of the Small Group and explained that they had used the SPG ranking as the main basis for their funding recommendations, but that broader factors such as regional or thematic distribution, opportunities to build on past successes, country involvement or previous performance had also been considered. The Small Group recommended 16 projects for funding and detailed explanations were provided on the reasoning behind the recommendations.

After the discussion the SPG supported the recommendations of the Small Group to go forward to the IGM.

Comments were made on a number of specific issues, for instance on the importance of science/policy links and the fact that this issue seems to be not fully understood by many proponents. It was generally agreed that the issue is extremely difficult to address, but in the longer term it will be central to the success of APN to find a means of doing so. A brief discussion on the issue of 2-year-projects concluded that the second year's funding should be contingent on satisfactory performance in the first year. The SPG would assess interim reports from proponents which should be submitted to the Secretariat in January each year.

The outcome of the discussion, including funding amounts for the projects, will be presented as a recommendation to the Inter-Governmental Meeting.

## **5. APN Networking/Capacity Building Programme**

The Secretariat presented a proposal for an APN Networking and Capacity Building Programme, designed to increase the involvement of those countries that have until now been least involved in APN activities. The programme was generally welcomed and received strong support from all SPG members. A flexible approach to the use of the funds was recommended. Furthermore it was suggested to build on already existing projects wherever appropriate, in order to use the limited funds most efficiently.

There was a discussion about which countries should be targeted and it was suggested that Mongolia and Nepal should also be added to the original list of Bangladesh, Cambodia, Laos, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. In light of the limited budget for the first year it was proposed to extend the trial period to 2 years, with Mongolia to be included in the second year. During the first year the Secretariat would conduct a full

review of the options for the long term.

Following an evening discussion among South Asian representatives, two activities were proposed for the first year in that region: a regional networking/awareness raising workshop to be held in Pakistan with APN supported participation from Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. The participating countries will together identify the themes for the meeting. The coastal zones proposal from Sri Lanka would also be given some additional funding to enable a broadening of participation and outcomes.

## **6. Review of APN Proposals Process**

The Secretariat reported the results of the review of the APN Proposals Process commissioned by the 4th IGM. Recommendations were made on a number of issues designed to improve fairness, efficiency and quality of service to proponents.

The introduction of a pre-proposals system was welcomed by all, after clarification of some procedural issues. There were some suggested revisions to the pre-proposal format which are included as Attachment III.

There was an extensive debate about the future of the review process. It was generally accepted that the current approach cannot be maintained, and in that context it was agreed to move toward a mail review system. However, members expressed their concern that a number of details would require careful consideration such as the role of the SPG and Small Group in the new process, the number of reviews required per proposal, the need to group reviewers by proposals themes, the need to deal adequately with the different types of proposals such as meetings and research projects, the need for a tightened Conflict of Interest policy, etc. The Secretariat undertook to perform a detailed feasibility study which would address all these issues and report back to the 6th SPG.

The recommendations on conflict of interest, 2 year proposals, the Rapid Selection stage, APN Per Diem rates and the other minor recommendations were all accepted by the SPG. It was suggested not to limit the number of proposals which could be submitted by a Proponent, but to clarify that the APN would only fund a maximum of one project per proponent each year.

During the debate there was a recognition that the APN is now entering a more mature phase of its activities. As such the role of the SPG is changing away from a focus on basic processes such as performing the review function, to a more strategic role in assessing the major scientific issues for the region and the means to foster the necessary research.

## **7. System for Identifying Key Scientific Priorities**

The Secretariat introduced the proposed system for identifying Key Scientific Priorities.

There was general agreement that the APN should agree scientific priorities which should reflect the frontiers of global change science and the proposed system was accepted by the meeting, with some minor revisions emphasising the need for flexibility. The revised system is included as Attachment IV.

## **8. CO<sub>2</sub> Inter-Calibration Workshop**

On behalf of Japan Mr. Onogawa introduced a proposal for a workshop to promote efforts to improve the inter-calibration of CO<sub>2</sub> measurements, which is essential to ensure fully comparable data. These measurements are used to identify the origins of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, an essential task to evaluate the success of efforts to reduce anthropogenic emissions. This development was welcomed by SPG members, who were encouraged to liaise with Mr. Onogawa over the possibilities for involvement of the relevant agencies in their countries.

## **9. Election of Co-Chair**

Prof. Higuchi explained that one new Co-Chair has to be selected since according to APN rules his 2 year term was now at an end. Prof. Higuchi nominated Dr. Graeme Pearman of Australia as his successor for consideration by the SPG, outlining his qualifications for the post. Dr. Moten of Malaysia seconded the nomination. Dr. Pearman graciously accepted the nomination and was accepted as a new SPG Co-Chair by acclamation. The term will be for two years starting after the 5th Inter-Governmental Meeting and ending at the 7th.

On behalf of the SPG, Prof. Zhao thanked Prof. Higuchi for his tremendous contribution to the APN. The SPG applauded his many years of involvement, guidance and dedication to the APN in an expression of deep appreciation, and a small token of the APN's appreciation was presented to him.

## **10. START Update**

On behalf of the START International Secretariat Prof. Fuchs gave an update on recent developments within the START system. He focused in particular on START's catalytic role and its focus on capacity building. He then suggested that APN and START should further explore avenues for cooperation, in particular with regard to expanding the role of Liaison Officers, database development and capacity building.

## **11. Other Business**

Dr. Pearman alerted the SPG to the particular scientific successes of two of this year's APN sponsored projects (99011 and 99013), which the short reports distributed could

not fully communicate. The APN now needs to find a way to build on these successes and extend the benefits derived.

A number of points of information were also raised and the APN Secretariat was encouraged to continue cooperation both with other environmental bodies within the region and with similar organisations such as the IAI and ENRICH.

## **12. Science Presentations**

Three science presentations were given. Dr. Amir Muhammed made a presentation on the major issues and the national approach to global change research in Pakistan. Dr. Koshy gave an overview of science and science needs from the Oceania perspective. Prof. Fuchs gave an overview of the results of the APN sponsored scoping workshops held in Kobe in October, "CLIMAG" and "Urbanisation, Industrial Transformation and Environmental Change".

## **13. Closing**

Participants expressed their heartfelt appreciation to the Secretariat for its work in organizing the meeting, and to the Co-Chairs for their leadership. A large vote of thanks was given to the Government of Pakistan and in particular Mr. Elahi and his staff at the Ministry of Environment, Local Government and Rural Development for hosting the meeting.

## **Attachment. II**

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