

Fifth Strategic Plan

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Message from the Chair of the Task Force and Secretariat Director

It is our honour and pleasure to present the 5th Strategic Plan (2020–2024)* of the Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN).

In the course of the 5th Strategic Phase, APN will continue to strengthen partnerships and conduct activities that promote and foster regional-based research and capacity building. In the light of the challenges of global change, particularly the current COVID-19 pandemic, the world community has recognized the urgency to work together across borders and disciplines: APN is ready to contribute to the efforts to “build forward better” and to establish a post COVID-19 world that is more resilient, sustainable, safe and equitable.

The 5th Strategic Plan was scheduled to be endorsed and presented at the start of the new strategic phase in July 2020. However, the work of drafting the Strategic Plan was disrupted by the pandemic. Nevertheless, the Intergovernmental Meeting approved the present Strategic Plan at its 24th session in February 2021.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to the members of the 5th Strategic Plan Task Force listed on the inner cover of the present report. Their contributions were essential to the development of the 5th Strategic Plan.



Yasuo Takahashi

Chairperson, 5th Strategic Plan
Task Force



Gen'ichiro Tsukada

Director, APN Secretariat

* On 23 June 2022, the 25th Intergovernmental Meeting (IGM) approved the extension of the 5th Strategic Phase by two years until the end of June 2026. This document has been revised to reflect the decision of the IGM.

Rationale

The Asia-Pacific region is the setting for the development aspirations of more than half of the world’s population. Attempts to achieve these aspirations have been placing a significant burden on the sustainability of the region’s natural resources, communities, and cultural heritage. This is further exacerbated by the continuing natural and anthropogenic changes in the Earth’s bio-geophysical system.

Evidence-based research and scientific endeavour have provided new insights into these changes and their associated impacts; however, scientists, policymakers, practitioners and the general public acknowledge that there are further challenges ahead. The Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN) is exceptionally well-placed to contribute to the generation of new knowledge to address these evolving global change and sustainability challenges by supporting collaborative research and capacity development activities, particularly those aimed at training the next generation of early-career professionals.

For over 20 years, the APN has contributed to, and helped shape, the global change agenda by identifying and addressing the diverse challenges. The APN, through its programmes and alignment with regional and global scale agendas such as IPCC, IPBES, the Paris Agreement of UNFCCC, UN Sustainable Development Goals, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, as well as its ongoing support and delivery of support services, will continue to contribute towards a more sustainable future in the Asia-Pacific region, by bridging international boundaries and facilitating dialogue between the scientists, policymakers and other societal stakeholders.

The impact of COVID-19 pandemic is challenging the global society well into the future. While it continues to affect the world’s socio-economic systems, climate change and environmental degradations do not subside. Therefore, there is an urgent need to tackle emerging environmental challenges, including climate crisis, and COVID-19 as an interlinked concern. Furthermore, economic recovery through transition towards decarbonization has become imperative for sustainable development. Accordingly, APN will enhance its support of research and capacity development activities on global change and sustainability by providing scientific findings that can contribute to realization of more sustainable and resilient societies.

Vision

APN’s vision is a dynamic and responsive Asia-Pacific community effectively addressing global change and sustainability through innovative and transdisciplinary research and capacity development activities that support policy development and implementation, as well as enhancing the role that civil society organizations and the private sector can play.

Mission

APN’s mission is to support a cohesive and interactive community of global change researchers, policymakers, practitioners and civil society across the Asia-Pacific region through innovative and transdisciplinary approaches that draw upon the extensive network of science-policy practitioners.

An integral part of its mission is to support and promote the scientific investigations of changes in the Earth's life support systems and their implications for sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region. APN contributes to the realization of these investigations through:

- ▶ Supporting research and science-based response strategies.
- ▶ Effectively linking scientific outcomes with policy mechanisms applicable to all levels of governance and societal sectors in each country.
- ▶ Scientific capacity development within and beyond governments, including affected communities and other members of the civil society.

Global change affects all countries, and its impacts and the ability to measure and understand these impacts intersects different disciplines. Therefore, APN strives to address global change and sustainability in a holistic approach that involves the active participation of all member countries across a broad spectrum of challenges in the following areas:

1. Climate;
2. Biodiversity and ecosystems;
3. Air, land, coasts and oceans;
4. Food, water and energy;
5. Risk and resilience; and
6. Human dimensions.

The ability to connect governments, the private sector and civil society has also become more urgent to accelerate the use of innovation and applied science to address the impacts of global change. The role of the private sector in the APN subregions will be explored for the delivery of research outcomes and services to those in need.

Values

The APN, being a network of emancipated member countries that strives to overcome the challenges of global change and achieve sustainability, will adopt the following values as guiding principles for its work and activities:

- Value 1: Respect for the cultural, traditional, and political identity of member countries.
- Value 2: Open and respectful dialogue and diplomacy in the conduct of APN activities.
- Value 3: Scientific integrity and adherence to professional values and practices when conducting and applying the results of science.
- Value 4: Collaboration, and equal and full participation of member countries in the management of APN and its activities.
- Value 5: Ethical and transparent management practices in the administration of APN resources.

Goals

Goal 1: Research

Supporting regional and international cooperation in research on global change and sustainability issues particularly relevant to the Asia-Pacific region.

Through the support of research on issues that are holistic and transdisciplinary, APN aims to produce scientific knowledge that can contribute to the implementation of international agendas, such as the Paris Agreement, Sustainable Development Goals, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, UN Decade of Ocean Science (2021-2030), as well as the accumulation of scientific knowledge at IPCC, IPBES, etc.

Examples of activities of particular focus under this Goal include:

1. Exploring new research initiatives to support projects on high priority topics of common interest of APN and like-minded organizations.
 - a. Enhancing collaboration with the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP), particularly through the Coordinated Regional Climate Downscaling Experiment (CORDEX) and its flagship pilot studies¹.
 - b. Contributing to the Asia-Pacific Adaptation Information Platform (AP-PLAT)² by promoting relevant programmes on climate change adaptation.
 - c. Contributing to achieve carbon neutral society.
 - d. Synergy between climate change and disaster risk reduction under the concept of adaptive recovery.
 - e. Contributing to address the issue of marine plastic debris and microplastics, particularly through strategic collaboration with international organizations.
2. Advancing work in areas of Circular and Ecological Economy (CEE)³, including zero carbon cities, nature-based solutions, climate-smart agriculture and transformation to more resilient societies in the COVID-19 era in the Asia-Pacific region.
3. Conducting activities to synthesize findings of APN funded projects.
4. Enhancing contribution to the discussions and work of UNFCCC, IPCC and IPBES.
5. Supporting research on global change and sustainability issues, especially in the Pacific region.

1. CORDEX is a WCRP framework to evaluate regional climate model performance through a set of experiments aiming at producing regional climate projections: <https://cordex.org/experiment-guidelines/flagship-pilot-studies/>

2. The Asia-Pacific Adaptation Information Platform (AP-PLAT) aims to serve as an online platform for information sharing to support effective climate risk management through adaptation: <https://ap-plat.nies.go.jp>

3. The Circular and Ecological Economy (CEE) is an initiative to enhance sustainable socio-economic activities by drawing on locally available energies, natural resources, infrastructure, industrial conglomerations, as well as the indigenous culture, particularly in rural areas.

Goal 2: Capacity development

Enhancing capabilities to participate in research on global change and sustainability and to support science-based decision-making.

APN believes that research should ideally involve scientists, including early-career professionals, and members of other societal groups at different levels. Developing their capacity is vital to enable APN member countries to formulate scientific evidence-based policies.

Examples of activities of particular focus under this Goal include:

1. Enhancing efforts in providing support to early-career professionals through tailored research activities.
2. Enhancing efforts in providing capacity development to early-career professionals that meet their specific needs, for example, the Proposal Development Training Workshops (PDTWs).
3. Continuing initiatives to strengthen the capacity development programme CAPaBLE.
4. Creating holistic and transdisciplinary capacity development activities on topics of relevance to society.



Goal 3: Science-policy interactions

Strengthening interactions between scientists, policymakers, practitioners and members of other societal groups, and providing sound scientific information for policymaking processes.

APN aims to strengthen communication and exchange of information between members of different societal groups.

Examples of activities of particular focus under this Goal include:

1. Creating discussion and information exchange fora, such as scoping workshops, Science-Policy Dialogues, etc. with strategic follow-up plans for post-event communication and activities to continue and deepen the discussions.
2. Enhancing development and use of policy-oriented information for policymakers on scientific findings in high quality publications.
3. Encouraging stakeholder involvement in all phases of projects and activities.



Goal 4: Community engagement

Continuing to enhance communication and collaboration with like-minded organizations and other stakeholder groups on issues of common interest.

Recognizing the importance of joining forces and increasing impact, APN aims to communicate and collaborate at all levels of its activities with other organizations in the global change and sustainability communities.

Examples of activities of particular focus under this Goal include:

1. Communicating with stakeholder groups and like-minded organizations on new emerging topics of global change and sustainability science and policy, and exploring possibilities of new collaborative activities.
2. Reviewing the relationships between APN and other international research organizations and funding mechanisms to be more responsive to changing context.
3. Strengthening communication in the Pacific region in close collaboration with relevant institutions in the region.
4. Exploring possibilities to establish, with support of the Subregional Committees (SRCs), contacts to regional and subregional intergovernmental organizations.



Goal 5: APN and its operations

Enhancing the institutional, operational and financial base that is efficient, durable, equitable and able to support APN and its activities.

APN recognizes that its success and the continuation of its work are dependent on the high degree of commitment of member countries and a robust institutional and operational infrastructure as a network.

Examples of activities of particular focus under this Goal include:

1. Exploring possibilities of further streamlining the operation of the organs and suborgans of APN.
2. Identifying appropriate and realistic targets for operational cost reduction.
3. Developing fundraising capability to secure a balanced financial base with the contribution of member countries, as well as other sources, including the private sector.
4. Scrutinizing options for partnership activities in cost-sharing manner.



Communication, dissemination and outreach

To achieve the above goals, APN strives for communication and outreach that reach all stakeholders in diverse groups of the society and that can contribute to effective information exchange and dialogue among them, for example, through:

1. Improving the outreach strategy to raise awareness among stakeholder groups and foster dialogues at and between different levels of the society by fostering diversification in the types of outputs, by also advancing the use of digital technology for video conferences and webinars, etc.
2. Designing and implementing a mechanism to measure and collect feedback from the audience on outputs produced.
3. Continuing to develop and disseminate high quality publications to illustrate the work of APN.

Monitoring and evaluation

Recognizing that assessing the success of APN's work is essential, also in terms of identifying opportunities for its advancement, APN will establish sets of indicators and develop a plan to monitor and evaluate its achievements in the 5th Strategic Phase.

Target areas for monitoring and evaluation

APN will monitor and evaluate its work against its five goals, i. e. research, capacity development, science-policy interactions, community engagement, and APN and its operations. The effectiveness of APN in communication, dissemination and outreach for each of these five goals is another essential area to monitor and evaluate.

Performance indicators

APN will develop realistic indicators to monitor and evaluate its work. Where appropriate and reasonable, indicators will be established to measure the performance quantitatively.

Development of a robust plan for strategic monitoring and evaluation

APN will develop a conceptual strategy that includes a realistic methodology, including a mode of operation and timeline.

Acknowledgements

APN extends its deep appreciation to the Fifth Strategic Plan Task Force that worked diligently and tirelessly to develop the 5th Strategic Plan.

Additionally, APN cordially thanks its national Focal Points, members of the Scientific Planning Group and Capacity Development Committee, and Invited Experts for their dedicated and continued support of its work.



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