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Towards Low Carbon Development and Transition in Asia

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ABSTRACT: LoCARNet is a network of researchers that facilitates the formulation and implementation of science-based policies for low carbon development in Asia. It was launched in 2011 as a knowledge-sharing network of researchers deeply involved in domestic policy-making processes and aware of the importance of facilitating the realisation of a low carbon sustainable society. From its initiation, LoCARNet has facilitated science-based policies in order to realise a sustainable future with a stabilised climate. To this end, the network endeavours to establish research capacity in the region based on south-south-north cooperation and reflect research findings into policies to achieve low carbon growth. So far, LoCARNet has supported researchers and policy makers in Asia across different countries and sectors, facilitating their involvement in activities and furthering their capacity development. LoCARNet is expected to extend its activities to a worldwide research network to enhance south-south-north collaboration and provide practical input to the UNFCCC and the IPCC.

KEYWORDS: *low carbon societies, science-policy, knowledge sharing*

Background Information

APN's Low Carbon Initiatives Framework was launched in 2012 to promote research activities within developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region by providing support for these countries to form scenarios towards low carbon societies, as well as to identify policies to realise low carbon development, in light of the increasing importance of this region as it expected to become one of the leading areas in the world in terms of low carbon development. This programme has supported the activities of the Low Carbon Asia Research Network (LoCARNet) since its initiation.

LoCARNet is a network of researchers that facilitates the formulation and implementation of science-based policies for low carbon development in Asia. It was launched in 2011 as a knowledge-sharing network of researchers who are deeply involved in domestic policy-making processes and are aware of the importance to facilitate the realisation of a low carbon, sustainable society. Therefore, the aim of LoCARNet is to facilitate science-based policies in order to realise a sustainable future with a stabilised climate. To this end, the network endeavours to establish research capacity in the region based on south-south-north cooperation and to reflect research findings into policies to achieve low carbon growth.

Low Carbon Growth Policy Research

While Asian countries have common challenges and issues related to climate change, their culture (lifestyle, consumption patterns and social norms), geographical situations, areas of focus for GHG emission reduction activities and their concerns differ along with each country's particular economic state and development path. Moreover, emission factors and human and technical capacities differ in each country. It is widely accepted that low carbon growth research requires broad disciplinary knowledge, tools and methods for successful integration into the practical policy process. Against this backdrop, LoCARNet plays an important role in enhancing communications across different sectors and stakeholders through dialogue, information-sharing and joint studies. LoCARNet has efficiently promoted research for policies towards low carbon growth by enabling sufficient dialogue between scientists and policy makers while also encouraging collaboration amongst in-country researchers, whose research capacity and scientific knowledge are firmly grounded in their home countries.

The procedures associated with the formulation and

execution of low carbon growth policy are target setting, policy planning, selection of policies using economic and social evaluation, policy implementation, monitoring the effects of policies, and revising policies through review and feedback processes. Various urgent issues have been raised by the research community and policy makers and the importance of low carbon research has been highlighted, including the policy-making process and the use of integrated assessment models (IAMs); land use and forestry; GHG inventories; low carbon cities; local level practices, decisions and initiatives; the institution-alisation of low carbon green growth; and technology.

When formulating low carbon policies, policy options for climate change mitigation must be assessed. The suitability of the enabling policy options should be confirmed from various facets using scientific analysis, including both basic and advanced research. At the policy planning stage, for example, research requirements include data collection, formulation of a GHG inventory, technology needs assessments and IAM application. LoCARNet collaborates with the Asian Integrated Model (AIM) team at the National Institute of Environmental Studies (NIES) in Japan and with other researchers in Asia to formulate low carbon scenarios and create low carbon roadmaps as initial steps for developing low carbon societies in Asia.

Dialogues and workshops conducted between researchers and policy makers suggest that Asian countries have advanced their climate change mitigation activities, including the establishment of climate change policies and strategies, while also developing their research capacity. Numerous countries have integrated climate change issues into their national development plans in order to tackle climate change; this itself is a reflection of mainstreaming climate change mitigation measures. However, some countries need to develop research capacity and policy plans, while some have made efforts to set up national targets for climate change mitigation and submitted their National Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) to the UNFCCC.

Knowledge platforms such as LoCARNet serves an important function as further backup support for developing and implementing low carbon policy towards 2014, 2020 and 2050. As its next step, LoCARNet is working to extend its activities to a worldwide research network to enhance south-south-north collaboration and produce practical inputs to UNFCCC negotiations and the IPCC. Therefore, LoCARNet will continue its collaboration with other organisations and provide a platform to share knowledge and experiences, not only throughout Asia but beyond.

First LoCARNet Annual Meeting

The first annual meeting of the Low Carbon Asia Research Network (LoCARNet) was held in Bangkok, Thailand, 16–17 October 2012, co-organized by IGES (LoCARNet Secretariat), Asian Development Bank (ADB), APN, Joint Graduate School of Energy and Environment (JGSEE), Ministry of the Environment of Japan (MOEJ) and Thai Greenhouse Gas Management Organization (TGO).

At the opening session, Mr. Spachai Watanangura, Board of Directors of TGO and Mr. Soichiro Seki, Director General of Global Environment Bureau of MOEJ made statements and acknowledged the APN for its financial support to LoCARNet. Dr. Shuzo Nishioka, Secretary General of LoCARNet introduced the background, possible activities and his ideas on the way forward.

Following the opening session, a series of breakout sessions were held on a variety of themes, including IAMs, land use and forestry, greenhouse gas inventories, low carbon cities, local level initiatives, green growth and technology.

In Day 2, a dialogue between researchers and policy makers was held to discuss science-policy interaction, followed by another dialogue with stakeholders for discussing how LoCARNet will network with relevant organisations and what LoCARNet will do in the future. Dr. Akio Takemoto, Director of the APN Secretariat, participated in the panel discussion of this dialogue and

introduced the APN and its LCI Framework, a new APN programme to support regional research and capacity building activities in member countries. Drawing experience learned from the 16-year history of APN, he suggested LoCARNet develop a strategic plan that includes a common vision, mission and action plan in order to promote and sustain LoCARNet. He also suggested that LoCARNet develop partnerships with other organisations and networks to create mutual benefits.

At the wrap-up session, the LoCARNet Secretariat summarized key findings and concluded that these findings would be incorporated into the action plan of the LoCARNet.

Project Publications

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Figure 1. Participants at the First LoCARNet Annual Meeting.



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PROJECT TITLE

First Annual Meeting of LoCARNet, Bangkok, Thailand, 16-17 October 2012

COUNTRIES INVOLVED

LoCARNet Member Countries

DURATION

1 year

APN FUNDING

US\$ 40,000

PROJECT LEADER

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