
The Japan-UK Joint Research Project on a Sustainable Low-Carbon Society

Call for Action

Introduction

During the past two years, Japan and the UK have jointly hosted a series of expert workshops to explore both visions of low-carbon societies and practical steps to achieve them. Through the workshop series we have studied the necessity, urgency and feasibility of local, national and international action on reducing global greenhouse gas emissions through sustainable development, and have developed a shared understanding of low-carbon societies and their impacts on future development pathways and economic growth.

Key Findings

A set of key areas have been identified as being critical to put us on global low-carbon pathways which are consistent with achieving climate change and development goals:

- The development of low-carbon societies is essential and plays an integral part in addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- It is less costly to move towards low-carbon societies than to delay climate change mitigation and pay the resulting increased adaptation costs;
- A suite of policy options is required to facilitate the transition to low-carbon societies. Government leadership is crucial to set the enabling conditions under which individuals, business and organisations can benefit from the opportunities in new low-carbon markets, technologies, products and services;
- Substantial changes will be required in the built environment, transport, utilities, industrial and service sectors. These will need to be implemented in harmony with development goals. A portfolio of sustainable emission reduction measures is required, which take into account regional and national circumstances;
- Synergies between sustainable development approaches and the transition to low-carbon societies can deliver significant economic, social and environmental co-benefits;
- A shift to investment in low-carbon technology research, development, demonstration and deployment (RDD&D), emerging markets, products and services is required to deliver the long-term certainty needed to create incentives to invest in low-carbon choices; and
- The creation of low-carbon consumption options, coupled with enhanced consumer awareness, can help to enable the level of behaviour change required to make the transition to low-carbon societies

Key recommendations

Based on our findings from the workshop series, we the International Steering Committee for the Japan-UK collaboration on achieving low-carbon societies call

upon the Heads of State for the G8 and emerging economies to place a priority in delivering necessary measures in the following areas, in order to enable the transition to a low-carbon world. The series of workshops have identified essential actions to be:

- The establishment of a long-term goal for global greenhouse gas emissions reductions of at least 50% of 2000 levels by 2050;
- A rapid enhancement of international cooperation and sharing of expertise and best practise on achieving low-carbon societies between nations and in national, regional and international stakeholders;
- The Creation of appropriate incentives for business using long-term policy signals to strengthen carbon pricing e.g. through taxation and enhanced international emissions trading;
- The need to shift the focus of development investment in developing countries towards lower-carbon approaches, and towards a significant expansion in the deployment of existing low-carbon technologies in both developed and developing countries;
- Acceleration in energy efficiency improvement using incentives to encourage institutional and behavioural change;
- The expansion of current financial flows, international cooperation in low-carbon approaches and the development of new financing mechanism;
- A significant increase in funding for research and development for advanced technologies;
- Greater investment in the demonstration and deployment of near-market technologies and, in particular, the rapid deployment of carbon capture and storage technology at scale
- Adjusting trade regimes to encourage rapid deployment of technologies and products that enhance sustainable development while lowering carbon emissions;
- The Implementation of policies and frameworks which enable and promote a change in human behaviour and lifestyle, through providing consumers with necessary information and the opportunity to benefit from low-carbon approaches and in the removal of high carbon-intensive choices;
- A Shift, in a revenue neutral manner, taxation structures from income-based to environmental-based to encourage behaviour from business and individuals which internalises the cost of choices on global emissions;
- the development of new indicators that measure quality of life in a more meaningful way than GDP which effectively measures quantity of consumption;
- The building of trust within and between nations is essential to reinforce the credibility of long term goals and policies. Trust can only be built by continuing and enhancing dialogue between stakeholder groups within countries and between countries with diverse national circumstances.

International Steering Committee
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