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A Low Carbon Society is not just a utopia

The Low Carbon Society (LCS) is not a utopian vision, but is both technically and economically feasible. These are the findings from the Japan-UK Low Carbon Society project [1] published today in a special edition of the journal *Climate Policy* [2].

The cornerstone of the project was an international modelling exercise, *Low-Carbon Society Scenarios Towards 2050*, undertaken by nine national teams, with a strong focus on developing countries. The teams examined 3 different scenarios, including a case in line with discussions at the G8 Summit in Japan on 7-9 July 2008 - a 50% cut in global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050.

A Low Carbon Society was defined as one that will make an equitable contribution to the global effort of reducing greenhouse gases to a safe level combining both a high level of energy efficiency and security. The results of modelling activities and workshops demonstrated that reducing global carbon emissions by 50% is technologically and economically feasible. Energy efficiency, consumer responses and the choice of technologies for electricity generation play crucial roles in cutting CO₂ levels.

The implementation of a Low Carbon Society for developed countries will involve the deployment of low carbon technologies and changes to social models and lifestyles. It will require early target setting across all economic activities. Developing countries' transition to a Low Carbon Society must go in hand with their projected economic growth. Here, international co-operation is required to mobilise the necessary finance and technological expertise.

"We believe that the results of this international modelling exercise will be valuable to national and international policy-makers and can usefully inform the discussions on the Gleneagles Dialogue during Japan's G8 Presidency", concluded Prof. Jim Skea, Research Director of the UK Energy Research Centre.

"Demand side measures as well as supply side measures are needed to achieve Low Carbon Societies. This is not burden for business but a market opportunity in a sustainable world", explained Prof. Shuzo Nishioka of the National Institute for Environmental Studies (NIES) .

"To achieve Low Carbon Societies, all countries need innovations in their lifestyle, production and consumption patterns, and social infrastructure in addition to technological innovations" said Dr Tim Foxon, RCUK Academic Fellow at the University of Leeds. "Preferred Low Carbon Society pathways require clear target setting, and iterative cooperation across international borders and in all economic sectors" added Dr Neil Strachan, Senior Research Fellow at King's College London. "If developed countries can create and work towards clear and possible visions of Low Carbon Societies, it will make it easier for developing countries to follow a low carbon pathway" noted Dr Junichi Fujino, NIES Japan Senior Researcher.

Notes for Editors

[1] The Japan-UK Low Carbon Society Project was established by the Japan Ministry of Environment (MOE) and the UK's Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, DEFRA, in the framework of the UK's 2005 G8 Presidency. The two governments worked with three of the top climate and energy research centres in Japan and the UK, the National Institute for Environmental Studies (NIES), the Tyndall Centre on Climate Change and the UK Energy Research Centre (UKERC). The centres hosted 3 workshops involving researchers and stakeholders from 20 developed and developing countries and ran an international modelling comparison exercise, Low-Carbon Society (LCS) Scenarios Toward 2050.

[2] The special issue, 'Modelling Long Term Scenarios for Low-Carbon Societies', edited by Neil Strachan, Tim Foxon and Junichi Fujino, is *Climate Policy*, Volume 8, Supplement, 2008, published by Earthscan, and available at <http://www.earthscanjournals.com/cp/008/supp/default.htm>

The two main results of the modelling and workshops papers are free to download. Please see below

Preface: **Low-Carbon Society (LCS) modelling**

Neil Strachan, Tim Foxon and Junichi Fujino

direct link:

<http://www.earthscanjournals.com/cp/008/cp008S003.htm>

Editorial: **Policies and practices for a Low-Carbon Society**

Jim Skea and Shuzo Nishioka

direct link:

<http://www.earthscanjournals.com/cp/008/cp008S005.htm>

To see more information about the Japan-UK Low Carbon Society Project

<http://www.ukerc.ac.uk/ResearchProgrammes/EnergySystemsandModelling/ESMLowCarbonSociety.aspx>

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