

Key Findings of the First Annual LoCARNet Meeting

The following are a listing of the major findings arising from the First Annual Low Carbon Asia Research Network (LoCARNet) Meeting held on 16-17 October in Bangkok, Thailand.

LoCARNet was launched as a knowledge-sharing network of researchers and relevant stakeholders who are deeply involved in domestic policy-making processes, being aware of the importance of facilitating the realisation of a low-carbon and sustainable society, as well as looking at the formulation and better enabling implementation of science-based policies for low-carbon development in the region. Towards sound science-based low-carbon policy in the region, the annual meeting aims to exchange up-to-date scientific knowledge on common low-carbon growth research topics in this region.

1. Asia's potential role in climate stabilization

Asia has succeeded in achieving rapid social and economic development. Asia can play an important role in the stabilisation of climate and will contribute to global GHG mitigation by applying well-designed countermeasures grounded in science. In this way, Asia enjoys sufficient potential to become a global leader if Asian countries can opt for sustainable low carbon development paths compatible with their own particular conditions. A low carbon society in Asia should be developed by utilising "hardware" based on scientific and technological efficiency together with the "software" of social factors, traditions, cultural elements and creativity found in the rich Asian heritage and background.

2. Common approaches and methods but differential solutions

Asian countries need to delineate common processes and methodologies that will enable them to successfully transition from a planning phase to an implementation phase. While solutions will necessarily differ in accordance with the socio-economic and political circumstances of each country,

comparative analyses and the sharing of best practices and lessons learned will be key in promoting low-carbon activities. Traditional uniquely Asian values and social patterns held widely across the Asian region could be shared as common approaches, processes and methods.

3. Stakeholder driven policy research

The importance of LCSR (Low-Carbon Societies Research) activities in formulating and better enabling the implementation of science-based low-carbon policy is gradually gaining recognition in the Asian region. Interaction between researchers and policymakers would likely enhance evidence-based planning, implementation approaches and mutual understanding while also contributing to the formulation of a consensus among stakeholders. Researchers need to further demonstrate the feasibility of both long-term planning and short-term actions in order to align the often dynamic nature of policy decisions with long-term policy-making by the government and short-term decision-making by the private sector.

4. Managing countermeasures at local and sector scales

GHG emission reductions can be managed by addressing crosscutting and practical issues at different geographical scales such as at the city or local levels as well as at a sector scale in energy, agriculture, forest and land use change, among others. Cities often serve as good demonstration sites for implementing innovative local actions while sectors play a principal role in defining technologies and approaches to be used in reducing GHG emissions.

For instance, cities can offer to implement measures addressing structural and cross-sectoral issues with high mitigation potentials while introducing key countermeasures locally. Cities can improve the quality of life of residents and offer places which make it easy for people to live, work and play. Low carbon cities will be a main engine as well as a solution for improving liveability and sustainability within future urban development. Simultaneously, changes in the agriculture, forestry and land use sectors are expected to play an important role in GHG emission reductions in Asia at least over the next 15-20 years. These changes are also expected to comprise valuable knowledge-sharing contributions from developing countries in future years, as specific and comparative experiences.

5. Technology and capacity development and beyond for low carbon initiatives

Government investment and private sector leveraging in domains such as research and development (R&D) and demonstration provide key avenues for policies to promote low carbon and also "resilient" development strategies, including low carbon technologies. Awareness raising, market development and capacity development are also important elements for successful policy

strategies. As climate change is a multi-faceted and complex issue, it cannot be sufficiently addressed by a technology-based approach alone.

6. Multi-stakeholders and regional cooperation to emphasise co-benefits

A comprehensive set of actions can be put into practice through multi-stakeholder and regional cooperation while emphasising common co-benefit approaches at both the national and local levels. North-south and especially south-south mutual learning and co-operation are vital in enhancing the mobilisation and dissemination of available resources, technologies and knowledge in region-specific, yet commonly-shared social, economic and environmental contexts.

7. Role of LoCARNet

LoCARNet is expected to promote capacity development, provide a platform to support research by enhancing research collaboration in Asia and support dialogue sessions amongst researchers, policymakers, and other like-minded relevant stakeholders. The participants in the meeting also expect that the process of sharing interdisciplinary knowledge and expanding networks in different sectors will facilitate north-south/south-south cooperation, leading to technology transfer and low-carbon infrastructure development, thereby enabling a leapfrogging in development to transitions to low carbon societies (LCS) and low carbon cities in Asia.

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