

## The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Board Meeting of the e-ASIA Joint Research Program

July 10<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> 2014

Vientiane Capital, Lao People's Democratic Republic

### Minutes of the Meeting

1) The third Annual Board Meeting of the e-ASIA Joint Research Program (the “Program”), chaired by Mr. Malaithong, Director General of the Department of Planning and Cooperation, the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) of the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao P.D.R.) was held on the 10<sup>th</sup> and the 11<sup>th</sup> of July 2014 at the Lao Plaza Hotel in Vientiane, the capital of the Lao P.D.R. The meeting was attended by the Board Members from nine of the thirteen Member Organizations of the Program, namely:

1. MEXT/JST of Japan
2. MOST of the Lao People's Democratic Republic
3. MOST of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
4. HRC of New Zealand
5. DOST of the Republic of the Philippines
6. NSTDA of the Kingdom of Thailand
7. NIAID (NIH) of the United States of America
8. NCI (NIH) of the United States of America
9. MOST of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

The Board Members from Cambodia and Indonesia did not attend but expressed their intention to comply with the consensus of the Board.

Also in attendance were administrative staff from JST, MOST of Lao P.D.R., DOST, NSTDA and MOST of Vietnam.

2) As the Board Members of the newest Member Organizations in the Program, Prof. Mercer of HRC and Dr. Schneider of NCI were invited to introduce their organizations to the Board and to outline some potential opportunities for collaboration that might be pursued under the Program.

3) We, the attending nine Board Members, reviewed and confirmed the items that were approved at the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> ad hoc Board Meetings which were held via email. Those items are as follows:

4th ad hoc Board Meeting (August 2013)

- Formal participation of the National Cancer Institute of the United States

5th ad hoc Board Meeting (September 2013)

- Approval of 2 Japan-Vietnam-Philippines collaborative research projects in the field of 'Infectious Diseases'

6th ad hoc Board Meeting (January 2014)

- Formal participation of the Health Research Council of New Zealand

4) We reviewed and approved the contents of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Activity Report and requested that the Program Secretariat finalize the report.

5) We discussed again the representation of each country in the Board and their corresponding voting rights. Several opinions that differ from the results of discussion at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Board Meeting arose, but the Board agreed on the following: (1) each Member Organization should be represented by one Board Member; (2) there should be only one voting right per country no matter how many Member Organizations are from that country; (3) the Annual Board Meeting should have two parts, a “discussion session” and a “voting session”; (4) all the Member Organizations from one country may collectively decide which of them will serve as the voting Board Member at each Board Meeting. In light of these comments, we requested that the Program Secretariat make a draft revision of the Statute and present it for the Board's review and approval.

6) We agreed not to add “project management” among the responsibilities of the Scientific Advisory Council (the “SAC”) and requested that the Program Secretariat revise the current Terms of Reference of the SAC accordingly and present it for the Board’s review and approval.

7) Since we could not reach an agreement on IP management, we requested that the Program Secretariat collect information on each Member Organization’s minimum requirements to start funding, including requirements regarding IP, and prepare a template of an agreement for the Board’s review.

8) We approved one project from the Joint Call for Proposals in the field of “Functional Materials” and acknowledged that the project is subject to subsequent internal processes and final approval by JST of Japan, DOST of the Republic of the Philippines and NSTDA of the Kingdom of Thailand

9) We approved one project from the Flexible Call for Proposals in the field of “Infectious Diseases”. Regarding the other proposals, we requested that the Program Secretariat take prompt action in getting the necessary information from the Member Organizations and coordinate further selection of other projects.

10) We reviewed the past activities of the Program including calls for proposals and workshops in the five fields of cooperation.

11) We discussed the recommendations from the first SAC Meeting and agreed to: (1) launch more calls for proposals (we shall invite the Member Organizations to consider participating in any of the five fields of cooperation); (2) promote activities that will foster young talents and early career researchers in the region; (3) request that the “lead” Principal Investigator (“PI”) submit a Progress Report as well as a Final Report; (4) promote interaction among researchers, especially young ones, by encouraging them to visit each other’s labs and organizing more workshops, etc. We will also consider establishing a “Mobility Scheme” to enable

researchers to find potential partners for collaboration.

12) We agreed to revise the existing “Infectious Diseases” field of cooperation to “Health Research”, and to put “Infectious Diseases” and “Cancer Research” as prioritized areas in this new field. We also requested that the Program Secretariat consult the SAC about: (1) dividing the field of “Biomass and Plant Science” into “Alternative Energy” and “Food Security” or “Agricultural Science”, etc.; (2) establishing “Marine Environment Conservation” as a new field of cooperation as jointly proposed by 6 researchers from Japan, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia, while also considering other potentially more appropriate names such as “Environment”, “Climate Change” or “Marine Diversity Conservation”; (3) renaming “Disaster Prevention” to “Disaster Risk Reduction and Management”.

13) We will welcome collaboration with Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Mongolia. However, as a first step, we request that the SAC justify their choice of these countries as new partners and then ask that the Program Secretariat start contacting public funding organizations in these countries.

14) We reaffirmed that the SAC should be the body to give “high level” advice to the Board with a broad perspective.

15) We agreed to request that each project prepare one Progress Report after 18 months of research and one Final Report for the purpose of project

management. Progress Reports shall be shared or reviewed only by “funding” Member Organizations and not by all the Board Members for evaluation, while Final Reports (or their abstracts) shall be shared or reviewed by all the Member Organizations. In order for the Board to be able to understand the progress of each project, the Board Members representing “funding” Member Organizations shall report the progress of each project at the Annual Board Meeting. Progress reports should also be reviewed and discussed by the SAC. In this regard, we recognized that all the Member Organizations as well as the SAC members need to conclude a “General” Non-Disclosure Agreement. Moreover, we request that when making an award the Program Secretariat should inform the investigators about the above requirements and conditions. We shall also request that each investigator follow the rules of his/her funding agency.

16) We discussed and agreed to apply the following criteria in evaluating projects. We also request the SAC to confirm these criteria.

- (i) Relevance of the Research
- (ii) Mutual Benefits of the Joint Research
- (iii) Effectiveness of Exchange

17) We confirmed that Member Organizations which intend to be involved in all phases of a call for proposals and subsequent selection, namely: the call for proposals, evaluation, communication of final decisions, and support for the selected projects (including support for teams participating on an in-kind

basis), shall be defined as “participating Member Organizations”.

18) We acknowledged that there are three types of funding modality as follows and that each participating Member Organization needs to mention these funding modalities at the beginning of the text of the call:

- (i) New: New budget is requested for a project (either new or additional)
- (ii) Re-budgeting: Funds from the Member Organization are reallocated from one spending category to a project approved under the Program, or are combined with goods, commodities, or services instead of money (i.e. material compensation)
- (iii) In-kind: A principle investigator participates in a project using funds that are already available, which are not provided by the Member Organizations of his/her country

We also acknowledged that it is necessary to ask PIs in the application form if they are able to join a project on an “in-kind” basis in the event that the Member Organization of his/her country is not able to fund them.

19) We agreed that “in-kind” support may come from public sources, foundations or non-profit organizations only (i.e. profit-making organizations are not allowed). We also agreed that PIs participating in a project on an “in-kind” basis need to notify the funding agency (i.e. his/her funding source) that he/she will reallocate their budget for the e-ASIA project, and to obtain a “letter of consent” from those agencies. Moreover, the Member Organizations that accept only “in-kind” proposals are still required to evaluate those

proposals and the opinions of all Member Organizations, whether they are participating on a “new” or “in-kind” basis, should be equally respected.

20) We agreed not to accept changes to the combination of participating countries or the funding modality of each research team as modifications to pre-proposals for submission as full-proposals. Regarding change of PIs, we affirmed that it should be clearly stated in the call guideline that “any change of the PI may require additional review.”

21) We agreed not only to promote state-of-the-art projects, but also to put more focus on requirements from society. In this regard, we requested that the Program Secretariat consult the SAC about the specific fields to focus on. At the same time, we will also consult our local committees, advisory boards and councils.

22) We agreed to promote industry engagement in the Program through measures such as funding researchers from industry and/or inviting them to our workshops. However, “in-kind” participation with funding from a profit-making organization is not allowed.

23) We and the Program Secretariat agreed to enhance public relations activities to increase the public profile of the Program. One of the proposed actions is to publish short articles describing the Program in scientific journals.

24) We recognized the proposals from MOST of the Lao P.D.R. and JST of Japan to launch calls for proposals in the fields of “Biomass” and “Disaster Prevention” respectively, while also recognizing that the specific titles of these fields may be revised as described in paragraph 12.

25) We agreed not to separate calls for proposals into “Normal” and “Flexible” types. A call for proposals can be launched whenever there are three or more Member Organizations that can secure budget to fund projects. In other cases, we will cope flexibly. Either way, the same evaluation criteria should be applied.

26) We recognized that JST of Japan is now in preparation to host a second workshop on “Intelligent Infrastructure” in December 2014, in order to promote collaboration in field of “Advanced Interdisciplinary Research towards Innovation”.

27) We acknowledged that the Program Secretariat Office will soon be moved to the Thailand Science Park where NSTDA of the Kingdom of Thailand has offered a formal location. We also recognized that it is necessary to consider how we can share the cost of the Program Secretariat. Moreover, we commended the outstanding performance of the Program Secretariat and expressed its appreciation for the professional way in which the Program Secretariat continues to fulfill its responsibilities.

28) We request that MOST of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar consider hosting the fourth Annual Board Meeting in 2015 in the event that MOSTI of Malaysia, the next chair Member Organization, is not able to host the meeting.