

The 5th Annual Board Meeting of the e-ASIA Joint Research Program

August 2nd – 3rd 2016

Auckland, New Zealand

Minutes of the Meeting

1) The 5th Annual Board Meeting of the e-ASIA Joint Research Program (the “Program”), chaired by Prof. Kathryn McPherson, Chief Executive, the Health Research Council (HRC) of New Zealand was held on the 2nd and the 3rd of August 2016 at the Langham Hotel Auckland in Auckland, the largest city of New Zealand. The meeting was attended by the Board Members from nine of the seventeen Member Organizations of the Program from eight of the twelve countries, namely:

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

The Board Members from RITEKDIKTI of the Republic of Indonesia, MOH

of the Lao P.D.R., MOSTI of Malaysia, MOE of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, RFBR of Russian Federation, ARDA and TCELS of Thailand, NCI of the USA did not attend. MOST of Lao P.D.R, NSTDA of Thailand and NIAID of the USA delegated a voting right assigned by country. The Board Member from MOE of Myanmar expressed their intention to comply with the consensus of the Board. The Board Member of RFBR of Russia expressed an opinion in writing to the Board in advance of the Board Meeting as an opportunity for their representation or voting in a Board decision. Also in attendance were administrative staff from JST, AMED, HRC and NSTDA. As observers to the Board Meeting, the Representatives from two Organizations from Australia, Department of Industry, Innovation and Science and National Health and Medical Research Council also attended.

- 2) Ms. Karla Falloon, Manager, International Science Partnerships, Science, Innovation and International Branch, Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment of New Zealand and Prof. Kathryn McPherson, the Chair of the Meeting presented a welcome address.
- 3) The attending nine Board Members reviewed what had been discussed and agreed at the 4th Annual Board Meeting including the significance of expanding collaboration and redefinition of the fields of cooperation.
- 4) The Board reviewed and confirmed the items that were approved at the

11th and 12th ad hoc Board Meetings which were held via email. Those items are as follows:

11th ad hoc Board Meeting (April 2016)

- Approval of 2 projects from the 5th call for proposals in the field of 'Disaster Risk Reduction and Management' and 1 project in the field of 'Intelligent Infrastructure for Transportation'.

12th ad hoc Board Meeting (June 2016)

- Approval of 4 projects from the 5th call for proposals in the field of 'Health Research'

5) The Board reviewed and approved the contents of the 3rd Annual Activity Report distributed to the Board Members prior to the 5th Annual Board Meeting and requested that the Program Secretariat post the report on the Program website.

6) The Board noted that the Program Secretariat will prepare the 4th Annual Activity Report and present it for Board's review and approval via email.

7) The Board reviewed the 5th Call for Proposals in the four fields, 'Health Research', 'Intelligent Infrastructure for Transportation', 'Disaster Risk Reduction and Management' and 'Bioenergy' including participating Member Organizations, duration of the Call, successful projects, etc. The Board noted that the evaluation process has been delayed in the field of "Bioenergy."

8) In order to improve the transparency and clarity of the review process used to assess applications submitted in response to e-ASIA calls for proposals, the Board agreed to prepare a descriptive document that could be shared publically. The Board asked the Program Secretariat to prepare a document that outlines the e-ASIA review process and to include this document as an item on the List of Program-Related Documents shown in the Appendix of the Program Statutes and call guidelines. The outline shall describe the step-by-step process of application evaluation, and it will include the evaluation criterion used by (and provided by) each Member Organization participating in the calls. It will also identify any other information Member Organizations need to have included in applications to meet their review requirements.

9) The Board noted the newly appointed Board Members, Prof. Ocky Radjasa of RISTEKDIKTI of Indonesia to replace Dr. Agus R. Hoetman, Dr. Michinari Hamaguchi of JST of Japan to replace Dr. Michiharu Nakamura and Dr. Nares Damrongchai of TCELS of Thailand. The Board also re-endorsed and welcomed the new Program Secretariat staff, Mr. Yoshihide Kobayashi of JST as the replacement of Ms. Eriko Kishida, a former Program Secretariat staff, and endorsed and welcomed Ms. Jirawadee Mattoon of NSTDA sent from NSTDA as the new assistant staff. The Board expressed deep appreciation for the outstanding service rendered by Ms. Kishida and for the continuing support provided by JST and NSTDA.

10) In reports from the representative of each Member Organization who organized the workshops, the Board reviewed the workshops on “Emerging Infectious Diseases and Cancer Research” held in Yangon, Myanmar in conjunction with the 4th Annual Board Meeting and “Green and Bio Nanotechnology for Innovative Materials System” held in Tokyo, Japan in conjunction with a large international conference in this field. The Board also reviewed the e-ASIA projects workshop held in Bangkok, Thailand with attendance of the principal investigators of the projects selected from the 1st pilot joint call for proposals. The Board expressed an appreciation to the Member Organizations for organizing the workshops and recognized the importance of the opportunity for researchers to network through these kinds of activities. In order to enrich and promote these activities, the Board requested the Program Secretariat collect information on international conferences and scientific meetings held in the region, circulate the information by means of e-ASIA web site and other appropriate mechanisms, and explore the possibilities of convening e-ASIA workshops in conjunction with those meetings to publicize the Program effectively and promote future collaboration under the Program. The Board also agreed to provide the Program Secretariat with information on related events held in the region so that the Program Secretariat can inform the Member Organizations and explore possibilities for organizing workshops in conjunction with those events. Moreover, the Board agreed to continue publicizing the e-ASIA JRP to enhance its visibility, and invite more collaboration to the Program.

11) The Board was updated with the summary of current ongoing projects and the status of prospective countries.

12) In addition to the deletion of the “Peer Review Panel” as approved at the 4th Annual Board Meeting, the Board discussed modification of the Program Statute proposed by the Program Secretariat and agreed to add a new document to clarify the application screening and review process in the Appendix “List of Program-Related Documents”. The Board also agreed that the description related to “Ad-hoc Board Meeting” in the Programs Statute be amended to clarify such meetings have the same decision making authority as the Annual Board Meeting. In this regards, the Board proposed to change the Program Statute as seen below;

- (i) Add “(d) Process of application review” under Article 6. (3) (ii)
- (ii) Add “14. Review Process for application” under List of Program-Related Documents.
- (iii) Rewrite Article 6. (1) 1st paragraph, on “Ad-Hoc Board Meeting” to indicate that Ad-Hoc Board Meeting has the same authority as the Annual Board Meeting
- (iv) Replace “attendees” with “Board Members who have voting rights” in the last paragraph of Article 6., since an Ad-Hoc Board Meeting has the same authority as an Annual Board Meeting where Members are present in person.
- (v) Move the paragraph after Article 6. (3) (v) to Article 6. (3)(vi).

(vi) Add “, and/or attend discussion session of the Annual Board Meeting”
to the end of Article 4. (8).

The Board tasked the Program Secretariat with drafting a revision of the Program Statute incorporating the above modifications and any necessary editing for clarity and to then present these revisions for Board review and approval.

13) Dr. Teruo Kishi, the Chair of the Scientific Advisory Council (hereinafter “SAC”) reported the results of the third SAC Meeting to the Board and present SAC’s recommendations and suggestions. Subsequently, the Board discussed the topics one by one.

14) The Board reconfirmed that the duration of membership of the SAC as well as the term of its Chair and Vice-Chair shall be three years and noted that Member Organizations appointing a SAC member need to consider if they reappoint him / her to continue to the second term as agreed at the 4th Annual Board Meeting.

15) In response to the SAC’s comment at the 3rd SAC meeting that the number of SAC member per country should be one, the Board discussed the number of SAC member per country again. It was noted that the Board agreed in the 4th Annual Board Meeting that each Member Organization could nominate a SAC Member if they choose to do so (i.e. multiple SAC Members from one country are acceptable). This decision was revisited in

light of SAC's advice. The Board Members that supported single SAC Members per country expressed concern that a country with multiple SAC Members would have disproportionate representation and that it might become difficult to reach an agreement in a SAC Meeting. On the other hand, the Board Members that supported multiple SAC Members per country commented that the SAC has only an advisory role where no decisions are made, and that a single expert SAC Member cannot cover the wide range of scientific fields in order to provide sufficient scientific advice to the Board. The Board tasked the Program Secretariat to report the discussion points from the Board to SAC to come back to the next Board Meeting with more detailed information concerning their rationale for a single SAC member per country. In the meantime – the Board agreed to keep the relevant part of Terms of Reference (hereinafter “TOR”) of SAC with the description of “multiple SAC Members per country are acceptable” as agreed in the 4th Annual Board Meeting.

16) The Board welcomed SAC's advice and the Program Secretariat's suggestion regarding “Guest Partners” and agreed to the conditions which are as follows:

- (i) Approval by the Board is necessary to be a “Guest Partner”;
- (ii) Observing Board Meetings is possible but “Guest Partner” Organizations will not be represented on the Board (i.e. no voting rights);
- (iii) Participation will be on a call by call basis;
- (iv) Separate or additional approval by the Board is not necessary for a

- “Guest Partner” to participate in any one call for proposals;
- (v) Participation in an individual call for proposals is possible for “Guest Partners” only when at least three Full Member Organizations participate in the call for proposals (i.e. “Guest Partners” may join a call for proposals only as the 4th and after participating organizations);
 - (vi) Participation in a joint project is possible for PIs from the countries of the “Guest Partner” Organizations only when at least three PIs from the countries of the Full Member Organizations participate in the project (i.e. PIs of the countries of the “Guest Partner” Organizations may join a project only as the 4th and after PIs from the countries of the Full Member Organization;
 - (vii) Participating in a call for proposals does not require obligation of “new funds” for the grantees. For Guest Partners, participating in a call for proposals on an “in-kind” basis or by “re-budgeting” is acceptable;
 - (viii) No nominating right of SAC Member (Observation only).

The Board reconfirmed that ministries, agencies and other public / governmental bodies with funding potential that may wish to participate from the other countries than East Asia Summit (EAS) participating countries would participate as “Guest Partners” as decided at the 4th Annual Board Meeting. Moreover, the Board reaffirmed that the non-EAS countries which agreed to be applied the above conditions of “Guest Partner” at this point are Bangladesh, Mongolia, and Sri Lanka, with the Board welcoming these collaborations at the previous Annual Board Meetings. As agreed, the Board asked the Program Secretariat to modify

the paragraph 8 (c) of TOR of SAC to add “Guest Partners and” to “Observers” in the paragraph.

17) The Board decided to defer further discussion with regard to the expansion of e-ASIA membership to organization from countries other than EAS participating countries, except for Bangladesh, Mongolia and Sri Lanka. The board agreed that currently, new membership of E-ASIA would not be actively pursued. However, should organizations from other countries express interest in joining E-ASIA, the board would discuss again.

18) The Board pointed out the inconsistency between the paragraph 7 and the last paragraph of 8 (b) of TOR of SAC, considering the case when Chair and / or Vice-Chair of the SAC change organizations and whether he/she needs to be replaced or can maintain the position once the nominating Member Organization agrees. The Board tasked the Program Secretariat with revising the TOR of SAC by incorporating all comments and present it for the Board’s review and approval.

19) The Board discussed a range of programs that might be able to collaborate with the e-ASIA JRP. JST of Japan introduced “SATREPS,” a Japanese government program that promotes international joint research under the collaboration between JST and JICA, and “Japan-Asia Youth Exchange Program in Science (SAKURA Exchange Program in Science)”,

JST's funding program for enhancing exchanges between Asia and Japan of the youths, " as the potential programs which may be utilized by researchers to enrich collaboration in the region, and also present "JASTIP", which is the funded project in ASEAN under the JST's program named "Collaboration Hubs International Research Program, CHIRP," as a potential platform to develop further collaboration in the region. HRC of New Zealand explained "A Healthy Diet for Healthy Life", a cooperation program with EU, noting this collaboration was in its infancy and there may be potential for involvement of countries in the Asia Pacific region at a later date. NSTDA of Thailand introduced "ASEAN talent mobility program", aiming to promote researchers and/or STI (science technology and innovation) personnel mobility/exchange within the region and the SEA-EU mobility call which is an activity under the "SEA-EU-NET" project of the EU 7th Framework Program (FP), to facilitate researchers' cooperation by encouraging researchers' mobility between Southeast Asia and Europe. NIAID of the US introduced "U.S.-Japan Cooperative Medical Sciences Program (USJCMSP)", funding opportunity in Infectious diseases and immunology research for investigators from U.S., Japan and/or other Asia-Pacific countries, operated by NIAID, AMED, CRDF Global, encouraging mentoring and training of early-stage and female investigators and some NIH Training programs in Health Research.

- 20) The Board welcomed the new content on the Program website proposed by the Secretariat that introduces research members involved in the granted

projects by posting their brief CVs, information on current and future science interests, and contact information as the first step for developing “e-ASIA Grantee Network”. Although some of the information necessary to create the content is contained on the application forms, the Board understands the risk of personal information disclosure and asked the Program Secretariat to obtain permissions from PIs and research members with regard to putting their information on the Program website.

- 21) As agreed in the 3rd Annual Board Meeting that the Board Members representing “funding” Member Organizations shall report the progress of each project at the Annual Board Meeting, the Board was updated with the results of finished projects, the progress of all ongoing projects, and a brief outline of the newly selected projects reported by the “funding” Member Organizations. The Board appreciated this opportunity to understand the progress of each project and asked the Program Secretariat to request the SAC provide brief comments for the Final reports of finished projects in addition to providing reviews on Progress reports of ongoing projects as agreed in the 3rd Annual Board Meeting. In addition to this, the Board requested the Program Secretariat modify the Final Report template to add an item that describes the next steps or plan for when the project is finished. In addition, the Board tasked the Program Secretariat with clarifying the template to indicate only outputs or achievements relevant to e-ASIA JRP be listed in the Annex. The Board recommended Member Organizations be advised in funding information, including contracts, that researchers must

include a statement that the research was supported (at least in part) by e-ASIA JRP in any associated publications and meetings.

22) Reflecting the discussion in the session of project report review above, the Board recommended modifications to draft template of Progress Report as below;

- (i) To add the item to ask “what is the opportunity and pathway to move forward” and “any support to request from the Program” in “4. Summary” or “6. Comments”
- (ii) To clarify the item to describe training, workshop, collaboration, presentation
- (iii) To add the box for the “SAC Review Feedback”

The Board asked the Program Secretariat to finalize the template by reflecting the Board’s recommendations and present it for the Board’s review and approval.

23) The Board discussed the time frame of next call for proposals and agreed below as the time frame of the next as well as routine calls for proposals

- Call duration from October 2016 to January 2017
- Review meeting around June 2017 in conjunction with the Annual Board Meeting
- Approval in June 2017 at the Annual Board Meeting
- Start funding from July through October 2017.

The Board confirmed there is an opportunity for Ad-Hoc call for

proposals by a separate schedule from routine calls if three or more Member Organizations desire to launch a call.

The Board also discussed possible topics of next call for proposals and requested the Program Secretariat to revise the summary spreadsheet based on the results of the discussion and distribute it to the Board for further discussion (see related Documents 4. Prospective Call Topics.xlsx).

24) Following the discussion at the 4th Annual Board Meeting, the Board further discussed conditions/requirements to launch a call or start funding to a particular project and explored alternative solutions acceptable for all Member Organizations to keep the smooth ongoing realization of Program initiatives. To prepare the ground for discussion, the Board shared a draft “Letter of intent” to launch calls and a draft “Letter of support confirmation” to start funding prepared by the Program Secretariat on the basis of the proposal by the Board at the 4th Annual Board Meeting. NSTDA also provided a sample “Letter of intent” and other legal documents which contains information that NSTDA needs to obtain from other participating organizations at each step of calls management. Subsequently, the Board explored the minimum steps and instruments which are acceptable for all Member Organizations.

- (i) MoU to launch a call for proposals: The Member Organizations in attendance including NSTDA of Thailand, one of the Member Organizations that required an MoU to launch a call for proposals as of the 4th Annual Board Meeting, agreed it would be sufficient

to have a simple one-page “Letter of Intent” confirming each Member Organization’s intention to participate in an individual call for proposals rather than an MoU. However, since there were some absent Member Organizations who had not confirmed whether this would be acceptable, the Board decided to further consider this issue taking into consideration input received from other absent Member Organizations including ARDA of Thailand.

- (ii) MoU to allocate funding to a project: Of those Member Organizations in attendance, NSTDA of Thailand and MOST of Vietnam stated they required a single agreement be signed (any name is acceptable, such as MoU, MoC, agreement, etc.) by all Member Organizations related to a particular project confirming the Member Organizations agree to support the project. Such an agreement is necessary for NSTDA of Thailand and MOST of Vietnam in order to obtain financial commitment in their countries/organization (i.e. they do not need such an agreement when their funding modalities are “in-kind”). On the other hand, this approach is problematic for some Member Organizations (e.g. NIAID), because it is outside of the context of being in the e-ASIA JRP partnership (i.e. from legal point of view, they are not forming a unit / relationship with other Member Organizations under the e-ASIA JRP but funding individually through the e-ASIA JRP successful PIs that come from their own country). Explaining this is complex, taking a lot of time to explain and obtain approval

internally. A consensus on the best way forward could not be achieved and the Board suggested the Member Organizations concerned discuss this further to find an option to meet necessary administrative procedures with further discussion at the next Board Meeting. The Program Secretariat asked NSTDA to share an example of the Agreement among funding agencies for further discussion.

- (iii) Collaborative Research Agreement (hereinafter CRA): Some Member Organizations require PIs / PI's research institutions to have a CRA among PIs / PI's research institutions, whilst others do not. All Member Organizations in attendance agreed that conclusion of CRA is very beneficial for researches to reduce the risk of unnecessary conflicts. However, some Member Organizations expressed concern that it could be overly complicated to establish a common e-ASIA JRP CRA format agreed by all Member Organizations, who have different requirements and make different contributions to each project. The Board therefore maintained the position agreed at the 4th Annual Board Meeting (i.e. to leave the development and use of CRA up to the researchers and their institutions). However, the Board agreed that the call guidelines should be amended to strongly recommend the development of CRAs to assure optimal understanding and coordination among the collaborating scientists working on each project. It should also be noted that

some Member Organizations required the use of CRAs in multi-party collaborations. The Board also decided to further discuss this topic. Sample CRAs will be made available on the website as a resource for applicants.

25) The Board also discussed ethical requirements of Member Organizations to start a project and tasked the Program Secretariat with articulating for each relevant call, that all appropriate national ethical review and approval requirements must be met by applicants. Some Board Members proposed that evidence should be shown that the ethical review and approval by applicants prior to the award of funding. One of the Board Members proposed a two-steps Review; 1) a concept review by SAC to check ethical and scientific eligibility, followed by 2) full proposal review by Member Organizations. A Board decision related to these points was deferred. The Board tasked the e-ASIA Secretariat with tabling this issue at the next Board meeting for further discussion.

26) The Board discussed the possibility of identifying a special allocation within national scholarship systems and mobility schemes in each country where young researchers might be able to mobilize to the country of their project partners to facilitate research activities. The Board recognized the importance of training for young investigators but it was noted that not all Member organizations would be able to ring fence additional funding. The Board recognized and praised JST concerning its update of special reserves

for the e-ASIA projects under the Japanese Government Scholarship awarded by MEXT of Japan.

27) The Board expressed a great appreciation to NSTDA for offering the Program Secretariat a formal location in NSTDA of Thailand based on the MoU between JST and NSTDA and noted this agreement will expire at the end of July 2017. All Member Organizations enthusiastically welcomed the NSTDA statement that they intend to extend the term to host the e-ASIA Secretariat Office by renewing the MoU.

28) The Board noted that MOST of Lao P.D.R and JST are planning a workshop on “Green and Renewable Energy Technology for Sustainable Environment”, to be co-organized by the Program Secretariat and JST and welcomed more participation from the e-ASIA participating countries and other countries in the region.

29) The Board thanked DOST of the Philippines for offering to be the host of the Sixth Annual Board Meeting in the Philippines in the first half of June 2017. The Board tasked the Program Secretariat with discussing this issue further with DOST, and to inform the Board Members accordingly.

30) The Board recognized that the 4th SAC Meeting will be convened in Cambodia or the US around February or March 2017. The Board expressed its appreciation for the proposal from MOH of Cambodia for hosting the

next SAC Meeting and for the similar offer from the NIAID of the US. The Board tasked the Program Secretariat to further discuss this issue with the relevant Member Organizations, starting from MOH of Cambodia. The Board also understands that Thailand, where the Program Secretariat is located, is an alternate option for the venue, if any obstacle appears to convene the next SAC Meeting in Cambodia and the US.

31) The Board closed its meeting with a unanimous expression of warm appreciation to HRC of New Zealand, especially the Chair, Prof. Kathryn McPherson for her spectacular chairmanship during the two days meeting and Ms. Fiona Kenning with their team for the outstanding arrangements made for the meeting and evening program, and for their hospitality to all participants.