

## The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Board Meeting of the e-ASIA Joint Research Program

June 22<sup>nd</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017

Cebu, Philippines

### Minutes of the Meeting

1) The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Board Meeting of the e-ASIA Joint Research Program (the “Program”), chaired by Dr. Rowena Cristina L. Guevara, Undersecretary for Research and Development, the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) of the Philippines was held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June 2017 at the Costabella Tropical Beach Resort in Mactan, Cebu, Republic of the Philippines. The meeting was attended by the Board Members (including proxies of the appointed Board Members) from ten of the nineteen Member Organizations (including Quasi Member Organizations) of the Program from eight of the thirteen countries, namely:

1. NHMRC of the Commonwealth of Australia
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. TRF of the Kingdom of Thailand

9. NIAID (NIH) of the United States of America

10. MOST of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

The Board Members from MOH of the Kingdom of Cambodia, Ristekdikti of the Republic of Indonesia, MOH of the Lao P.D.R., MOSTI<sup>1</sup> of Malaysia, MOE of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, RFBR of Russian Federation, ARDA and TCELS of Thailand, and NCI of the United States did not attend. MOH of the Lao P.D.R. delegated its authority to MOST of the Lao P.D.R., ARDA and TCELS delegated to NSTDA, and NCI delegated to NIAID. MOE of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar expressed its consent in writing to decisions made by the Board in advance of the Annual Board Meeting. The new Member Organizations, namely NHMRC of Australia and TRF of Thailand participated in the Annual Board Meeting for the first time after obtaining their Membership.

2) Dr. Rowena Cristina L. Guevara, Undersecretary for Research and Development, the Department of Science and Technology of the Republic of the Philippines presented a welcome address. She emphasized the importance of e-ASIA JRP and that the Program will expand our research network by tackling common challenges together with research teams from three or more countries instead of from only a single country.

3) **Review of the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Board Meeting:** The attending ten Board

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<sup>1</sup> MOSTI is a Quasi Member Organization having not appointed its Board Member yet as of June 2017.

Members reviewed what had been discussed and agreed at the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Board Meeting, including official documentation to improve transparency of the review process related to joint calls for proposals, conditions for “Guest Partner”, and the number of SAC Members per country.

4) **Review of the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Activity Report:** The Board reviewed and approved the contents of the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Activity Report distributed to the Board Members prior to the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Board Meeting and requested that the Program Secretariat post the report on the Program website. The Program Secretariat will prepare the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Activity Report and present it for Board's review and approval via email.

5) **Ad hoc Board Meeting:** The Board reviewed and confirmed the items approved from the 13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> ad hoc Board Meetings held via email. Those items are as follows:

13<sup>th</sup> ad hoc Board Meeting (November 2016)

- Formal participation of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) of Australia

14<sup>th</sup> ad hoc Board Meeting (January 2017)

- Approval of 2 projects in the field of ‘Bioenergy’ from the 5<sup>th</sup> call for proposals

15<sup>th</sup> ad hoc Board Meeting (March 2017)

- Format of Progress Report
- Minutes of the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Board Meeting
- Revision of the Program Statute
- Revision of the Terms of Reference of the Scientific Advisory Council (SAC)

16<sup>th</sup> ad hoc Board Meeting (April 2017)

- Formal participation of the Thailand Research Fund (TRF) of Thailand
- Participation of the National Science Foundation (NSF) of Sri Lanka to the 4<sup>th</sup> SAC Meeting on 20 April, 2017 in Siem Reap as an observer

17<sup>th</sup> ad hoc Board Meeting (June 2017)

- Format of the Final Report

6) **The Program Secretariat Office in the next 3 years :** The Program Secretariat informed the Board that JST and NSTDA are now in the process of extending termination of the MOU between JST and NSTDA on the location of the Program Secretariat Office in NSTDA, which was originally co-signed by JST and NSTDA, to locate the Program Secretariat Office in NSTDA until 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017, to serve continuously as the Program Secretariat of e-ASIA during the next 3 years.

7) **Report of the Workshop in Lao P.D.R.:** Reported by the Dr. Silap Boupha, Lao MOST's Board Member, the Board reviewed the workshop on "Green and

Renewable Energy Technology for Sustainable Environment’ held on Family Boutique Hotel, Vientiane Capital, Lao P.D.R. co-organized by MOST of Lao P.D.R., JST of Japan and the Program Secretariat. In this workshop, potential collaborative research partnership and research topics on Biomass Production and Management, Biomass Energy Technology, Bio-refinery were discussed. The Board expressed an appreciation to the Member Organizations for organizing the workshop and recognized the importance of the opportunity for researchers to network through these kinds of activities.

8) **Introduction of new Member Organizations and replacement of Board Members:** The Board warmly welcomed the newly appointed Board Members, Prof. Anne Kelso AO of NHMRC of Australia, Dr. Narong Sirilertworakul, President of NSTDA of Thailand to replace Dr. Thaweesak Koanantakool and his deputy, Prof. Prasit Palittapongarnpim, Executive Vice President of NSTDA of Thailand to replace Dr. Chadamas Thuvasethakul, and Assoc. Prof. Waranya Wongwit of TRF of Thailand. The Board also welcomed the new Scientific Advisory Council (hereinafter “SAC”) members, Ms. Ira Nurhayati Djarot of Ristekdikti of Indonesia, Dr. Reynald V. Eborra of DOST of Philippines, and Dr. Chanwit Tribuddharat of NSTDA of Thailand. Regarding the Chair and Vice-chair of the SAC, the Board welcomed the reappointment of Prof. Teruo Kishi of JST as Chair and Dr. Chanwit Tribuddharat of NSTDA as Vice-chair.

9) **Introduction of new brochure:** The Program Secretariat informed the

Board that the new e-ASIA brochure was published. The contents of the brochure include 20 projects approved from 2012 to 2016 and photos of workshops held up to 2016. In the information on the Member Organizations, NHMRC and TRF, new Member Organizations, are already included.

10) **Update of the e-ASIA website:** The Program Secretariat reported in the Board Meeting that the e-ASIA website had updates. The additional contents on the website are new Members of the Board and SAC, newly started projects, modified Program Statute, and the Terms of Reference of the SAC (herein after “TOR of SAC”), which were already approved in the previous Board Meeting.

11) **Reports of promotion activities:** Some promotion activities were introduced in the Board Meeting. At the AUN/SEED-Net (Aug, Nov 2016) and Asia Nanotech Forum (Feb 2017), the Program Secretariat presented recent achievements of the Program. At the AGBIO 2017 (Feb-March 2017), the Program Secretariat set a booth to showcase activities of the Program. Mr. Sato, Secretary-General of the Program, attended the ASEAN-Japan Cooperation Committee on Science and Technology (May 2017) held in Brunei. Another future international workshop entitled the “20<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Emerging Infectious Diseases (EID) in the Pacific Rim” to be convened in China was also introduced to the Board Meeting by Ms. Gayle Bernabe, NIAID.

12) **Status of other countries for participation in the Program:** According to the information from Mr. Sato, the Department of Science and Technology of India (DST) showed interest in participating in e-ASIA. The Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation of Malaysia (MOSTI) conveyed to Mr. Sato that MOSTI was considering Full Membership participation, but they still had not carried out sufficient internal discussions to prepare a LoI. The Ministry of Higher Education of Malaysia (MOHE) is still under consideration about participating in the Program as well. The National Science Foundation of Sri Lanka (NSF) expressed its readiness to send a LoI to the Program Secretariat after its Board Meeting.

13) **Introduction of NHMRC, a new organization:** NHMRC, a new Member Organization, provided an introductory overview including its funding structure, challenges, and a new funding scheme called the Medical Research Future Fund. NHMRC expressed its intention to enhance the collaboration with Asian countries.

14) **Introduction of TRF, a new organization:** TRF, a new Member Organization, also provided an introductory overview including its organizational structure, highlights, and funding schemes. TRF commented that they can fund broad topic areas and there is no limitation on the scope of research.

15) **The issue on the number of SAC members:** The Board reviewed the

contents of the fourth SAC meeting and the history of the issue on the number of SAC members per country. Then Prof. Kishi, Chair of SAC, introduced to the Board two perspectives from the SAC members: 1) many SAC members were highly concerned with having multiple SAC members per country, since it's not practical to summarize SAC's recommendations at a one-day annual SAC meeting with more than 18 SAC members, and 2) the SAC also understood the importance of obtaining the input/opinions from all participating Member Organizations in SAC meetings across the wide range of research fields. Prof. Kishi explained to the Board about the SAC's proposal on this issue as follows:

- SAC supports "1 SAC member per country."
- SAC members should obtain input from other experts prior to an annual SAC meeting to cover broader areas of expertise.
- If there are multiple Member Organizations (MOs) in one country, the SAC member of that country should have an internal pre-meeting before an annual SAC meeting with other in-country MOs to obtain their input.
- SAC members agreed that other experts are able to attend SAC meetings as "Observers" if the officially-appointed SAC member cannot cover specific area(s) of S&T to be discussed.

The Board agreed with the proposal of the SAC with no objections. Then the Statute and TOR of SAC were modified as agreed in the Board Meeting about this issue. The modified sections are the following:

- Modification of the Statute



## Article 5. Organs of the Program

### (2) Scientific Advisory Council

The Scientific Advisory Council consists of senior researchers recommended by *the Member Organizations of each country*, and gives recommendations and advice to the Board on principal science and technology issues regarding the activities of the Program. The recommendations and advice of the Scientific Advisory Council will be ~~respected~~ *considered\** by the Board. Details are given in the “Terms of Reference of the Scientific Advisory Council.”

\*Since there was a suggestion that the word “respected” sounds too weak to show the authority of the SAC to the Board.

#### ● Modification of TOR of SAC

Composition 3:

The Council shall consist of members recommended by Member Organizations that choose to nominate a Council Member. When there are multiple Member Organizations from one country, *one* council Member *shall be jointly nominated by the Member Organizations of the country (i.e., one Council Member per country)*. The Council Members shall serve in their individual capacity as independent experts.

The above modifications were approved in this Board meeting.

16) **Introduction of Final Reports:** Each Member Organization introduced a brief summary of the final reports of the projects, which were finished

between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Board Meetings. The project entitled “Development of Functional Nanocarbon-Based Catalysts for Biomass Conversion Processes” was reported by JST. JST reported that they provided additional funding of 2.5 million yen as an emergency fund for recovery from the huge earthquake in the Kumamoto prefecture, by which the experimental environment of the Japanese research team was significantly damaged. AMED reported three projects, including the “International Study on Pulmonary Diseases Infected with Influenza Virus and *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*”, “Comprehensive Study on Virus Quasi-species and Vascular Permeability Factors in Severe Dengue Infection in Humans for Innovative Epidemic and Clinical Managements”, and “Development of an innovative diagnostic system against liver fluke infection in Southeast Asian countries”. AMED reported that they provided additional budget for boosting research to these three projects. HRC introduced the final reports of the project entitled “Whole-genome sequencing of drug-resistant *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* strains”. DOST reported the contents of the project entitled “Antigenicity to humans and gene polymorphism of the new malaria vaccine candidate, TAM of Asian malaria”. The two projects, “An integrated research for the development of a scheme to control emerging vector-borne viral diseases in Asia” and “Evaluation of the pandemic potential of H5N1 highly pathogenic avian influenza viruses circulating in Indonesia”, were introduced by NIAID.

17) **Grantee Network:** The Program Secretariat reported on the progress of the e-ASIA Grantee Network. Because of some difficulties, such as costs, labor,

etc. the work of establishing the Grantee Network has not progressed very well until now. The Board recommended to continue to construct a website as proposed and to consider using some existing information on sites in which researchers participating in the e-ASIA program are registered, such as “One Expert” in the Philippines and the “Researchmap” in Japan, in order to reduce the burden for both researchers and the Program Secretariat for maintenance, or some posting sites of project proposals, such as “e-Rad” in Japan to be linked with e-ASIA Grantee Network. The Program Secretariat will consider the Board’s recommendation.

18) **Introduction of activities of Prof. Kishi:** On behalf of Prof. Kishi, Ms. Kishida, International Science Cooperation Division, Disarmament, Non-proliferation and Science Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, introduced the activities of Prof. Kishi as science and technology adviser to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. According to the presentation of Ms. Kishida, Prof. Kishi established a national network called advisory board for promotion of science and technology diplomacy; and the network’s conclusions of discussions were reflected to the outcome of the G7 Ise-Shima summit held in Japan in May 2016. In the meantime, Prof. Kishi presented a recommendation to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, which is in a booklet titled “Recommendation for the Future (STI as a Bridging Force to Provide Solutions for Global Issues).” Prof. Kishi showed his expectation that the e-ASIA program would be one of the best practices to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

19) **Documentation to participate in a Call for Proposals:** The Program Secretariat reviewed the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Board Meeting report regarding the need some Member Organizations have for documentation to allow participation in an e-ASIA JRP Call for Proposals. This was followed by a brief report on the follow-up teleconference that engaged MOST of Vietnam, NSTDA of Thailand, NIAID of USA, and the Program Secretariat. As a result of that teleconference, the involved member organizations and the Program Secretariat recommended to the Board that a standard format Letter of Intent (LoI) could be used to meet the documentation needs of all member organizations. Board review and approval of this approach was requested. Following discussion, the Board agreed that the Member Organizations should submit to the Program Secretariat a LoI, using a standard format (to the greatest extent possible), to document their commitment to participate in each future call. Then the Board asked the Program Secretariat to draft a LOI format that specifies a member organization's intent to support in a specific call and includes the following items: the potential number of qualified projects a Member Organization is prepared to support, the potential funding amount, and the funding modality the Member Organization is prepared to utilize for each call. [Update: After the Board Meeting, the Program Secretariat developed and cleared with Member Organizations a standard LoI format that included all the needed content. This format (attached) is to be used by the Member Organizations to prepare and submit LoIs printed on their letterhead to express their commitment of

support when they plan to participate in an e-ASIA JRP Call for Proposals.]

20) **Collaborative Research Agreement:** The Program Secretariat informed the Board that a sample of a Collaborative Research Agreement (hereinafter CRA) was posted on the e-ASIA website (<http://www.the-easia.org/jrp/documents.html>). Regarding Paragraph 3 on Confidentiality and Intellectual Property (hereinafter IP) Rights, the Board commented that the wording of Paragraph 3 should be more general because each organization taking part in the project should meet the IP policy of each country or each institute. Then the Board understood that as far as one Funding Agency requires CRA to the project, its institutions in the consortium are required to conclude CRA and recommended the Program Secretariat to add language such as “You respect the research institutions or/and funding agency’s intellectual property right” or “CRA should respect” to the call guideline.

21) **Ethical requirement:** The Program Secretariat reported the past discussion about the Ethical requirement with conducting an e-ASIA JRP collaborative project, and concluded that the Board agreed to articulate in the call guidelines that all appropriate national ethical review and approval requirements must be met by applicants. Then after the last Board Meeting, the Program Secretariat articulated such appropriate sentence in the call guideline of the 6<sup>th</sup> call and plan to apply it to the 7<sup>th</sup> call for proposals, and in subsequent calls.

22) **Review Process document:** In order to secure transparency and clarity in a review process for application, the Board decided to put the review process in writing. The Program Secretariat introduced a draft of Review Process document to the Board. The draft consisted of two cases, such as one-phase review process and two-phase review process. However, the Board offered to eliminate the part of a two-phase process because based on our past experience with the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> calls for proposals, a one-phase review process is more workable for e-ASIA JRP's peer-review process. The Board also advised to modify the phrase (e) (ii) of Review Process as follows:

(ii) Proposals that are ~~not~~-evaluated as “~~unable~~ *able* to support” by the Party of the country of the Lead PI.

The Board recognized that the sentence (e) (ii) of Review Process is an important condition in the review process for application. Therefore, in order to simplify the review process and to avoid time delays, the one Board member mentioned that the Member Organizations could describe the following phrase before item (a) in a call guideline: The Lead Principal Investigator, before submitting to e-ASIA, should secure endorsement from the Party of his/her country. The Board asked the Program Secretariat to send the Review Process document to all Member Organizations, so that they can review the comments and requirements of the document and then the Board can finalize it.

23) **Schedule of next call:** The Program Secretariat showed the expected

schedule of the next call according to the timeline of a routine call (or previous calls) as follows:

- Call duration : October 2017 to January 2018
- Approval : around June to August 2018
- Funding start : around September to December 2018

24) **Topics and participating organizations of next call:** During the Board Meeting, each Member Organization expressed which fields they are interested in participating for the next call; and the Board summarized the possible fields and participating organizations of the next call as follows:

- Health Research

Topics: ICT applications for health (for example: bio-maker), Infectious diseases and cancer, particularly TB, Dengue, influenza

Organizations: NHMRC, HRC, AMED, DOST, NSTDA, NIAID, NCI

- Environment

Topics: Climate Change issues on environment

Organizations: TRF, MOST of Vietnam, DOST, Ristekdikti

- Advanced Interdisciplinary Research towards Innovation

Topics: Traction and changing infrastructure development for intelligent electrify transportation system

Organizations: MOST of Lao, NSTDA (NECTEC), Ristekdikti

- Disaster Risk Reduction and Management

Topics: Risk reduction management for wind, floods and landslides

Organizations: JST, MOST of Lao, DOST, MOST of Vietnam

- Agriculture

Topics: Production of native life stocks, Climate Change resilient food crops

Organizations: JST, TRF, DOST, MOST of Vietnam

- Alternative Energy

Topics: Biomass energy

Organizations: JST, MOST of Lao, Ristekdikti, NSTDA

25) **Promotion of Early Career Researchers in the Program:** The JST introduced the situation that researchers younger than approximately 42 tend to have less chance to be awarded/receive funding and the issue about promotion of early career researchers in Japan. They proposed the idea to establish the category of early career researchers as part of the e-ASIA call with relatively small budget fund. NSTDA mentioned that in the case of Thailand, senior researchers get funding from TRF and young researchers have to apply more competitively with funding like e-ASIA. HRC commented that the time after getting a PhD is more appropriate than age, and preferred “early career” rather than “young researcher”. The Board agreed with the proposal of JST to build a separated category in the e-ASIA JRP. Details will be discussed in due course. The definition of “early career” researcher is a researcher “under 10 years after obtaining a doctoral degree.”

26) **Review of 5-year activities of the Program for Future Progress:** JST



reported the 5-year development/progress of the e-ASIA program and reviewed the SAC's role. JST also re-examined the processes of the selection of call topics and evaluation of final reports, and then proposed to insert new steps into these processes in order to take more advantage of the SAC's expertise. The Board reconfirmed the importance of the function of SAC. After the discussion, the Board decided to keep the selection process as it is, since the role of SAC is to give scientific advice and the Board would ultimately needs to decide the topics for a call. In addition to that, the Board agreed to request the SAC in the next meeting in Vietnam to assessment of the overall performance of collaborative activities.

**27) Scholarship and JASTIP (Japan-ASEAN Science and Technology Innovation Platform) Symposium:** Japanese Government Scholarships related to e-ASIA JRP were introduced by JST, and the result of the projects from 2017 October and the new announcement of 2018 were mentioned. Then the 4<sup>th</sup> JASTIP Symposium on “Biomass to Energy, Chemicals and Functional Materials,” which will be held in NSTDA, Pathum Thani, Thailand from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> July, was introduced by JST as well.

**28) Scheduled Workshops:** Scheduled workshops were introduced in the Board Meeting as follows:

- “Bio & Agriculture” related Workshop is being discussed among JST, BIOTEC(NSTDA) and TRF
- “Health” related Workshop: NSF of Sri Lanka is interested in

convening one.

29) **Schedule of the next Board Meeting and SAC Meeting:** The Program Secretariat informed the Board of the tentative schedules of the next Annual Board Meeting and SAC meeting as follows:

Annual Board Meeting

- Time: around August, 2018
- Venue: Vladivostok, Russia
- Host : RFBR of Russia

SAC Meeting

- Time: February or March 2018
- Venue: Vietnam.
- Host : MOST of Vietnam

The Board expressed its appreciation for the proposal from MOST of Vietnam to host the next SAC meeting.

30) The Board closed its meeting with a unanimous expression of appreciation to the Program Secretariat and to DOST of Philippines, especially the Chair, Dr. Guevara for her spectacular job for two days. The Board also appreciated DOST staff's meeting arrangements, including the evening program, and their hospitality to all participants.