

The 8th Annual Board Meeting of the e-ASIA Joint Research Program

Date: September 5th – 6th, 2019

Venue: Bangkok, Thailand

Participants: Listed in the Appendix

Minutes of the Meeting

DAY 1: September 5, 2019

1) The 8th Annual Board Meeting (ABM) of the e-ASIA Joint Research Program (the Program) was held on the 5th and 6th of September 2019 at Hilton Sukhumvit Bangkok, Thailand. The meeting was attended by the Board Members, including proxies of the appointed Board Members from fourteen of the twenty-one Member Organizations of the Program from ten of the fourteen countries, namely:

1. NHMRC of the Commonwealth of Australia
2. RISTEKDIKTI of Republic of Indonesia
3. MEXT/JST of Japan
4. AMED of Japan
5. HRC of New Zealand
6. DOST of the Republic of the Philippines
7. RFBR of Russian Federation
8. A*STAR of Singapore
9. NSTDA of the Kingdom of Thailand

10. TCELS of the Kingdom of Thailand
11. TSRI of the Kingdom of Thailand
12. ARDA of the Kingdom of Thailand
13. NIAID of the United States of America
14. VMOST of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

The full list of participants is attached to these minutes as an appendix. The Board Members from MOH and MIH of the Kingdom of Cambodia, MOST and MOH of the Lao P.D.R., MESTECC of Malaysia, MOE of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and NCI of the United States of America did not attend.

- 2) As is requested by the Board at the Annual Board meeting in Vladivostok in 2019, the Scientific Advisory Council (SAC) members were also invited to the meeting and four SAC members, Emeritus Professor Teruo Kishi, the Chair of the SAC from Japan, Dr. Chanwit Tribuddharat, the Vice-Chair of the SAC from Thailand, Dr. Raynoldo V. Eborra from the Philippines and Dr. David M Morens from the USA attended.

Welcome Remarks by the Representative of Host Organizations:

- 3) Prof. Prasit Palittapongarnpim, NSTDA Executive Vice President, Dr. Nares Damrongchai, TCELS CEO and Dr. Nattama Pongpairoj, TSRI Assistant Director, on behalf of the hosting Member Organizations (MOs) delivered welcome remarks underlining the importance of the Program as a platform to advance science through international collaboration and expressing appreciation to the Program Secretariat for their hard work and dedication in serving the Board and the Program. TSRI also informed that, as a result of STI system reform in Thailand, TSRI is the new name of TRF (Thailand

Research Fund) and its role has been changed to budget allocation. Nevertheless, TSRI still supports STI in its new capacity. Executives of NSTDA, TCELS and TSRI took turn to chair the 2-day meeting. The welcome remarks were followed by self-introductions from Board members and the Program Secretariat.

Introduction of MO Candidate:

- 4) Due to STI organization reform in Thailand, TSRI has been planned to take over new e-ASIA projects to National Research Council of Thailand (NRCT), which will be selected in the 8th call for proposals in the field of “Agriculture” on the topic of “Conservation, Improvement and Utilization of Animal Genetic Resources in Asia”. In order to get formal approval to be a member of the Program, NRCT had submitted a letter of intent to join the Program before the ABM, and therefore was invited as a MO candidate at the ABM. Ms. Tiwa Ngaowichit, Director, Division of International Affairs, NRCT made a presentation introducing NRCT activity and expectation for the Program, which was followed by vote to determine the formal participation of NRCT. The Board unanimously approved the participation of NRCT to the Program.

Introduction of New MO:

- 5) As a new MO since November 2018, A*STAR (Agency for Science, Technology and Research) of Singapore gave an introductory overview including its goal, mission and organization structure. A*STAR expressed its intention to enhance the scientific capacity through collaborating with partners in the Program.

Review of Activities:

6) A review of following activities, which took place after 7th ABM was presented by the Program Secretariat and the 7th Annual Activity Report, which summarized those activities, was approved by the Board:

- Key Topics Summary in 7th Annual Board Meeting in Vladivostok, Russia on August 22-23, 2018
- Ad hoc Board Meetings (23rd – 27th)
- Newly Selected Projects from 6th and 7th Call
- The 8th e-ASIA Calls for Proposals
- The 7th Annual Activity Report
- The Program related Workshops as briefly reported by a representative of respective organizing team:
 - “The e-ASIA Joint Research Program Workshop on Cancer Research” in Vladivostok on 24th – 25th Aug 2018 (by RFBR)
 - “e-ASIA Workshop on Strategy for Conservation and Utilization of Animal Genetic Resources in Asia” in Tokyo on 10th Oct 2018 (by JST)
 - “e-ASIA Workshop on Intelligent Infrastructure for Water” in Hanoi on 21st - 22nd Feb 2019 (by JST)
 - “Asia Pacific Scientific Workshop” in Singapore on 4th -5th Mar 2019 (by AMED)
 - “International Conference on Climate Change and Natural Disasters in the Asia-Pacific Region” in Vladivostok on 13th Aug 2019 (by RFBR)
- Update of the Program Website and Brochure: The e-ASIA Grantee Network webpage has already been launched, and a draft new brochure was distributed at the Board Meeting.

- **Status of Other Candidate Organizations:** The Program Secretariat has approached Ministry of Energy, Manpower and Industry (MEMI) of Brunei and two departments of India – Department of Science and Technology (DST) and Department of Biotechnology (DBT) - to join the Program. Ministry of Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change (MESTECC) of Malaysia, previously known as Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI), retains its status as a Quasi MO.

Discussion on e-ASIA Operation Policy:

- 7) The current requirement of e-ASIA projects is that a project is to be proposed by a consortium consisting of at least three different organizations from at least three different countries. It does not require the consortium to include any ASEAN countries. However, considering that ASEAN is assumed to play an indispensable role in the East Asian Summit on which the Program is based, the Program Secretariat would like to ask the opinion of the Board on this issue whether additional requirements on the ASEAN country participation should be made, and how to specifically deal with the 8th call on this issue, since there was a possibility that a project with no ASEAN country involved could be selected in the 8th call due to increasing the number of MOs outside of ASEAN.
- 8) Most of the Board members suggested that the Program should not pose additional requirements, since call themes are decided with reflecting interests of MOs from ASEAN countries and e-ASIA project should be equally selected by scientific merit. The Board discussed at length and concluded

that the current requirement of having at least three countries participating in an e-ASIA project is appropriate and there is no need to pose additional requirement for the 8th call and the future calls. Some Board members, in addition, suggested that the Program should help ASEAN researchers, especially from the countries with lower budget, to give an equal opportunity to find collaborators and to increase the engagement of the researchers from those countries in the consortium.

DAY 2: September 6, 2019

Discussion on Establishment of Working Group:

- 9) A concept of Working Group (WG) was introduced by the Program Secretariat to achieve better utilization of experts' insight and to provide long term call strategy into the whole call-project management process, which was proposed from AMED at the 7th Annual Board Meeting and to solve the existing issues in the current Program Scheme. This WG concept was proposed for the whole call-project management process from the 10th call onwards. WG will be established topic by topic, which is made up of administrative staff and experts assigned from each MO that are interested in the topic. WG will be formed to carry out the management from pre-call scoping, drafting call text and monitoring the funded projects, and will be dissolved when all the projects under the call complete their final review.
- 10) While the Board appreciates the proposal made by the Program Secretariat and inputs from SAC, some operational concerns were raised such as the long commitment of WG member as much as 6 years, risks of the

slowing down of the decision making comparing with current process, the overhead cost burden on MOs and the risks that MOs not being able to join WG due to the burden even if they are interested in the topic. In addition, NIAID proposed the idea of establishing an experts committee just before finalizing the call preparation process, so that we can reflect experts' suggestions with less cost and shorter time compared with WG process. The Program Secretariat responded to the concerns from the Board one by one and emphasized that the purpose of WG is to resolve the existing issues in call-project management process.

- 11) Recognizing WG idea and concerns from the Board members, the Board agreed to explore the pilot WG with two possible topics, "Materials or Engineering" and "Health", led by JST and AMED respectively. The Program Secretariat will, collaborating with JST and AMED, proceed preparation for the two pilot WGs for further consideration and propose the establishment of WGs for approval in an Ad-hoc Board Meeting accordingly prior to the 9th Annual Board Meeting.

Discussion on the 9th Call for Proposals:

- 12) Before the Annual Board Meeting, the Program Secretariat requested to all the MOs to raise candidate topics for the 9th call for proposals by questionnaire form, planned to launch around the beginning of 2020. The Program Secretariat presented the draft schedule of the 9th call and a summary of candidate topics raised by MOs.
- 13) The Board discussed at length on the topics for the next call for proposals and agreed on the four topics for the 9th call, involved MOs and lead MO to

draft a call text (indicated by bold and underlined), as following:

Topic (tentative)	MOs
<u>Agriculture (Food)</u> Functional Food	<u>RISTEKDIKTI</u> , DOST, ARDA
<u>Agriculture (Food)</u> Genetic Improvement of Native Chicken	RISTEKDIKTI, <u>DOST</u> , ARDA
<u>Advanced</u> Water Resource Management	RISTEKDIKTI, <u>JST</u> , DOST, ARDA, MOST(V)
<u>Environment</u> Climate Change Impact on Nature and Human Systems	NHMRC, RISTEKDIKTI, JST, DOST, <u>RFBR</u>
<u>Health</u> Infectious Diseases including AMR, Cancer, Mental Health, emphasizing precision medicine (Cancer and Infectious Diseases)	NHMRC, RISTEKDIKTI, AMED, HRC, DOST, RFBR, <u>TCELS</u> , NSTDA, NIAID, MOST(V)

14) Since three other fields of cooperation, namely Materials, Alternative Energy and Disaster Risk Reduction and management could not get enough MOs interested in the fields (one MO for Materials, 2 MOs for Alternative Energy and Disaster Risk Reduction and Management), the Board decided to skip 9th call for these fields.

15) The approved schedule for the 9th call is as follows:

Event	Schedule of 9 th call
Call framework tentative agreement	September 2019
Set call topics	End of September 2019
Document preparation MMO assign	October - December 2019
Submission of LoI	End of December 2019
Open call	Middle of January 2020
Close call	End of April 2020
Review in MOs	April – July 2020
Joint Review Meeting	August 2020 with the Annual Board Meeting

Announcement to applicants	End of November 2020
Contract preparation	December – February 2021
Start funding	January – March 2021

Report on the Joint Review Meetings of the 8th Calls for Proposals:

16) The Program Secretariat reported the list of candidate projects to the Board for approval, which had being discussed and summarized by the call participating MOs at the joint review meetings held on the first day of the Board meeting as following:

Project No.	Title	Field	Countries (MOs)
Health			
HE0805	The Predict-XDR Project: predicting genetic markers for pre-XDR and XDR tuberculosis	AMR/ID	Philippines (DOST) USA (NIAID) Japan (AMED)
HE0809	An international platform for discovery of novel chemotypes against flaviviral infection	ID	Thailand (NSTDA) Japan (AMED) USA (NIAID)
HE0815	Integrated application of human and pathogen genomic information for improvement of treatment outcome and control of drug-resistance in Asian Tuberculosis patients.	ID/AMR	Japan (AMED) Thailand (NSTDA) Philippines (DOST) Indonesia (RISTEKDIKTI)
HE0824	Tools to diagnose carcinogenic liver fluke infection	ID/CA	Australia (NHMRC) Russia (RFBR) USA (NIAID) Thailand (TCELS)
HE0836	Are TB neighbourhoods a high risk population for active intervention?	ID/AMR	NZ (HRC) Indonesia (RISTEKDIKTI) USA (NIAID)
HE0827 (pending NSTDA's decision)	Eliminating the major Helminth Neglected Tropical Diseases from the Lower Mekong Basin	ID	Australia (NHMRC) Thailand (NSTDA) Lao PDR (MOH) Cambodia (MOH)
Materials			
MA0807	Development of innovative		Japan (JST)

	nanobiodevices based on hybrid materials by combination of endemic South Asian biomolecules and nanocarbons		Vietnam (MOST) Philippines (DOST) Indonesia (RISTEKDIKTI)
MA0814	Development of New Functional Polymers from Plant Oils by Efficient Catalytic Carbon-Carbon Bond Formation, Post-Modifications		Japan (JST) Thailand (NSTDA) Philippines (DOST)
MA0816 (pending NSTDA's decision)	Microfluidic nanowires coupled with gold nanoparticles for Dengue viral disease diagnosis		Japan (JST) Thailand (NSTDA) Indonesia (RISTEKDIKTI)
Agriculture			
AG0804	Assessment on Genetic Diversity and Reproductive Biology of Carangid Fishes for Sustainable Use and Conservation		Thailand (NRCT) Sri Lanka (NSF) Japan (JST) Philippines (DOST)
AG0805	Preservation of endangered avian genetic resources through induced pluripotent stem cell (iPSC) derivation		Japan (JST) Russia (RFBR) Thailand (NRCT)
AG0807	Gene evolution and taxonomic relationships of the <i>Apis cerana</i> subspecies of Russia, Korea, Vietnam and Indonesia		Russia (RFBR) Vietnam (MOST) Indonesia (RISTEKDIKTI)

- 17) The Board approved ten candidate projects and gave provisional approval to two projects pending NSTDA's decision which should be reached by the end of September and confirmed that all review results will be announced to applicants at the end of November 2019 and the contract preparation process should be taken place between December 2019 to February 2020 and Funding is expected to start anytime from January to March 2020.

Report on the Measure to Facilitate Participation of Early-Career Researchers by JST:

- 18) Based on the proposal from JST to promote Early-Career Researchers' participation to the Program, we modified the application forms for the 8th

call for proposals to identify ECR in the research team and to add the plan of the project to nurture ECR. As the results of the modification, it was found that the ECR applicants' ratio of PIs in Japan had slightly increased, compared to the previous year, but the ECR ratio in all PI decreased. While the Board decided to keep this modified form to maintain the momentum, the Board shared the concern and recognized that this measure might not be enough to promote ECR if we saw the results of the 8th call. Therefore, the Board presented many ideas such as introduction of an ECR-only call, a call for a team consisting of ECRs and mentors and adding ECR to the judging criteria. The Chair advised to all the MOs to have a session to discuss this issue among researchers when MOs hold workshops.

Report on Evaluation Findings for the US-Supported e-ASIA Projects by NIAID:

- 19) NIAID conducted the survey to the US-supported e-ASIA projects to capture their perception and experiences with the Program for future improvements. The survey results showed that PIs have benefit from the Program in the form of new collaboration, capacity building, information sharing, etc. However, there were some concerns such as most awards not being used to provide training and the delay of funding. Since there was a request from other Board members, NIAID agreed to share the survey questionnaire with other MOs through the Program Secretariat so that any interested MOs could use the same or modified questionnaire to conduct the survey with their grant recipients and compare the result.

Report on the results of Japanese Government Scholarships related to e-ASIA

JRP Projects:

- 20) JST introduced Japanese Government Scholarship providing to overseas students attached to e-ASIA project with Japanese PI. In 2019, five new scholarships were awarded (1 each from Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand. 2 from Vietnam). Deadline for the next round of application is January 2020.

Introduction of Japan-ASEAN Consultancy Forum:

- 21) MEXT introduced the 1st Japan-ASEAN Multi-stakeholder Strategic Consultancy Forum to be held on 12th October 2019 at Bangkok International Trade & Exhibition Centre (BITEC), Thailand. In the forum, workshop-style focus group discussions (FDG) would be implemented among multi-stakeholders to initiate practical consideration toward social implementation of the research achievements of ASEAN-Japan collaborative research, including a few e-ASIA projects.

The 9th Annual Board Meeting:

- 22) NIAID proposed the next Annual Board Meeting to be held at NIH campus in Washington, D.C. on the last week of August or 1st week of September 2020. In addition to the 2-day Board Meeting, a site visit or a briefing forum to introduce Board members to other US funding agencies can be arranged. The Board requested the Program Secretariat communicate with all Board Members including absent Board members to check if it is possible to convene the next Annual Board Meeting in Washington D.C. or we would need to reconsider other venue.

Other e-ASIA related workshops:

- 23) JST introduced an e-ASIA Material Workshop to be held in Singapore in conjunction with the events celebrating the 10-year anniversary of JST Singapore Office. AMED introduced that they are planning an AMR Workshop to connect science and policy in Tokyo or Bangkok in February 2020.
- 24) The Board closed its meeting with a unanimous expression of appreciation to the Program Secretariat and the Chairs for the two-day meeting. The Board also expressed appreciation for NSTDA, TCELS, TSRI's staff work regarding meeting arrangements, including the evening program, as well as their hospitality extended to all participants.

Appendix

Participant List

■ Board Members / Representatives

#	Country	Organization	Name	Title
1	Australia	NHMRC	Ms. Prue Torrance	Executive Director of the Research Qualities and Priorities Branch
2	Indonesia	RISTEKDIKTI	Prof. Ocky Karna Radjasa	Director for the Research and Community Services
3	Japan	MEXT	Mr. Koshi Nitta	Director, International Science and Technology Affairs Division
4	Japan	JST	Mr. Osamu Kobayashi	Director, Department of International Affairs
5	Japan	AMED	Mr. Masahiko Noda	Managing director, Department of International Affairs
6	New Zealand	HRC/SAC	Emeritus Professor Andrew Mercer	Council member of HRC
7	Philippines	DOST	Dr. Rowena Cristina L. Guevara	Undersecretary for Research and Development
8	Russia	RFBR	Mr. Yaroslav Sorokotyaga	Division Director
9	Singapore	A*STAR	Dr. Raj. Thampuran	Special Advisor
10	Thailand	NSTDA	Prof. Prasit Palittapongarnpim, M.D.	Executive Vice President
11	Thailand	ARDA	Dr. Suwit Chaikiattiyos	ARDA Executive Director
12	Thailand	ARDA	Ms. Kunvara Chotiphansophon	Deputy Director
13	Thailand	TCELS	Dr. Nares Damrongchai	CEO
14	Thailand	TSRI	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nattama Pongpairoj	Assistant Director of TSRI

15	USA	NIAID	Mr. Frank Gray Handley	Associate Director for International Research Affairs
16	Vietnam	MOST	Ms. Le Thi Viet Lam	Deputy Director-General, Department of International Cooperation

■e-ASIA JRP Scientific Advisory Council

17	Japan	JST/MOFA	Emeritus Professor Teruo Kishi	Chair of the Scientific Advisor Council
18	Philippines	DOST-PCAARRD	Dr. Reynaldo V. Ebor	Executive Director
19	Thailand	Mahidol University	Dr. Chanwit Tribuddharat	Vice Chair of the Scientific Advisor Council
20	USA	NIAID	Dr. David M. Morens	Senior Advisor to the Director

■e-ASIA JRP Secretariat

21	Japan	Secretariat	Ms. Emi Kaneko	Secretary-General of e-ASIA JRP
22	Japan	Secretariat	Mr. Atomo Yukimune	Staff of e-ASIA JRP Secretariat
23	Japan	Secretariat	Mr. Yoshihide Kobayashi	Staff of e-ASIA JRP Secretariat
24	Thailand	Secretariat	Ms. Jirawadee Matoon	Staff of e-ASIA JRP Secretariat

■Other Participants

#	Country	Organization	Name	Title
25	Indonesia	RISTEKDIKTI	Mr. Suhetris Syamsuardi Sa'a	Director for Strategic Partnership
26	Japan	JST	Mr. Masayoshi Higuchi	Chief, Department of International Affairs
27	Japan	JST	Dr. Takashi Kawabe	Senior Program Coordinator, Department of International Affairs
28	Japan	AMED	Dr. Yuriko Suzuki	Manager, Department of International Affairs
29	Japan	AMED	Mr. Hiroki Hori	Director, Singapore Office
30	Japan	AMED	Dr. Shiho Bridge	Medical R&D Specialist, Singapore Office
31	Philippines	DOST	Dr. Jaime C. Montoya	Executive Director of DOST-PCHRD
32	Philippines	DOST	Dr. Enrico C. Paringit	Executive Director of DOST-PCIEERD
33	Singapore	A*STAR	Ms Lim Kah Ai	Dr. Raj's Companion
34	Thailand	NSTDA	Dr. Lily Eurwilaichitr	Acting Vice President
35	Thailand	TCELS	Ms. Taweeporn Gedarram	Director of Pharmaceuticals Programs
36	Thailand	TSRI	Assoc.Prof.Dr. Thongchai Suwonsichon	Director, Division of Agriculture
37	Thailand	TSRI	Ms. Jureewan Boonplong	International Research Network
38	Thailand	TSRI	Dr. Atichat Preittigun	International Research Network
39	Thailand	TSRI	Ms. Napapach Chanudom	International Research Network
40	Thailand	TSRI	Ms. Piyada Jutaviriya	International Research Network
41	Thailand	TSRI	Mr. Kasan Aksornthong	International Research Network

42	Thailand	NRCT	Ms. Tiwa Ngaowichit	Director, Division of International Affairs
43	Thailand	NRCT	Ms. Arpar Nateprapai	Foreign Relation Officer, Division of International Affairs
44	Thailand	NRCT	Ms. Kwansiri Wanwiwake	Foreign Relation Officer, Division of International Affairs