

March 27<sup>th</sup> 2015

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Scientific Advisory Council Meeting of  
the e-ASIA Joint Research Program

March 27<sup>th</sup> 2015

Bangkok, Thailand

Minutes of the Meeting

**1. General Outline**

1) The second Scientific Advisory Council (hereunder referred to as the “SAC”) Meeting of the e-ASIA Joint Research Program (hereunder referred to as the “Program”) was held on the 27<sup>th</sup> of March 2015 in Bangkok, Thailand at the Grand Millennium Sukhumvit Hotel. The meeting was attended by the SAC Members from six of the twelve countries represented by Member Organizations of the Program, namely: the Kingdom of Cambodia, Japan, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Republic of the Philippines, the Kingdom of Thailand and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Also in attendance were participants from the Republic of Indonesia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and the United States of America as representatives of their SAC members, Program Secretariat and administrative staff from the Kingdom of Thailand and Japan. A list of the participants is attached to these Minutes as Appendix 1.

2) Firstly, Ms. Eriko Kishida of the Program Secretariat/ Japan Science and Technology Agency (“JST”) Singapore Office briefly explained the Program

outline and updated the participants about recent activities such as new Member Organizations and selected projects.

3) Secondly, Dr. Hideo Nakajima of JST introduced the Japan Agency for Medical Research and Development (“AMED”), the new Japanese agency that would become a Member Organization of the Program from April 1<sup>st</sup>.

4) Thirdly, the participants reviewed the Minutes of the first SAC Meeting, and third Annual Board Meeting.

5) Lastly, the participants discussed the main agenda items, including revised Terms of Reference of the SAC, Non-disclosure Agreement, evaluation criteria, re-definition of the fields of cooperation, specific fields to focus on requirements from society and significance of expanding collaboration with Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Mongolia.

6) Dr. James M. Meegan of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) of the United States shared information on the state of the outbreak of Ebola. Due to the effective public health response including education, hygiene practices and prompt isolation, the numbers of infections are decreasing and there are clinical trials of vaccine and therapeutic candidates ongoing. It also turned out that social behaviors which are quite difficult to change are among the main causes for the outbreak.

## **2. Terms of Reference of the SAC**

1) The duration of membership of the Council shall be only one term of three years. According to the current Terms of Reference (“TOR”) of the SAC, “the duration of membership of the Council shall be three years. However, A Council Member may serve one or two consecutive terms”. However, there was a concern that 2 terms, six years in total, might be too long. Therefore, it was suggested that the Member Organizations should re-select their SAC members every three years. This does not preclude selection of a SAC member for a second 3-year term”.

2) Likewise, it was suggested that the term of the Chair and Vice-Chair shall be three years only.

3) Even though there were some opinions that the role of Chair and Vice-Chair should be rotated among the countries in order to avoid one country controlling the Council, it was finally agreed that, if they are re-elected, the same persons can serve for two terms in succession as Chair and Vice-Chair. This is based on consideration of regarding the Council as “new” or “reset” after every selection.

4) The role or position of the Chair and Vice-Chair shall remain with the person appointed by the Member Organizations. As for the current SAC members, they are selected based on their expertise and knowledge and not on the organizations they belong to. This means that even if the Chair changes organization during their term, they still should continue to serve as the Chair. However, there were suggestions that it may be easier to select the Chair and

Vice-Chair based on the organizations. Since this issue relates to a fundamental concept of how the SAC should be, the Program Secretariat will clarify the qualification to be a SAC member, revise the TOR of the SAC and then present it to the Board for review and approval.

5) The SAC confirmed that it should be the body to give “high level” advice to the Board with a broad perspective.

### **3. Non-Disclosure Agreement**

1) The SAC opposed the proposal by the Board to conclude a “General” Non-Disclosure Agreement in order to review Progress Reports. One of the reasons is that it might be possible for SAC members to know particular information via other sources such as domestic documents submitted by local researchers. In this case, if the SAC members have already signed a Non-Disclosure Agreement, there will be a conflict and it causes a problem.

2) Rather, it is suggested that the Progress Reports should only include the information that is disclosable. If the Progress Report includes any confidential information, the submitter needs to inform the Program Secretariat in advance and only those who are able to sign a “General” Non-Disclosure Agreement shall review that report. “Non-Disclosure Agreement” and “Information Sharing” are two different things.

3) It is also recommended that the call guidelines should include sentences that encourage grantees to release their data.

4) In order for the SAC to be able to understand the progress of each project, the Program Secretariat will summarize the ongoing projects and send those summaries to the SAC members.

#### **4. Confirmation of Evaluation Criteria**

1) The following evaluation criteria are confirmed to apply in evaluating projects.

(i) Relevance of the Research

(ii) Mutual Benefits of the Joint Research

(iii) Effectiveness of Exchange

2) It is also confirmed that these criteria are not call-specific but rather “general” and “common” to the Program.

3) It is also suggested that the Progress and Final Reports shall be as simple as possible in order to lighten the burden imposed on researchers.

#### **5. Redefinition of the Fields of Cooperation**

1) In general, the fields of cooperation should be broad enough to cover regional problems. Specific topics can be stated in the guidelines for each call for proposals. If there are areas that the Program puts particular emphasis on in any of the fields, those areas should be put in parentheses after the name of each field of cooperation.

2) In this regard, suggested fields of cooperation are as follows:

(i) Materials (Nanotechnology)

(ii) Alternative Energy

(iii) Agriculture (Food)

(iv) Health Research (Infectious Diseases, Cancer Research)

(v) Disaster Risk Reduction and Management

(vi) Advanced Interdisciplinary Research towards Innovation (\*)

(vii) Environment (Climate Change, Marine Sciences)

(\*) remains unchanged.

3) The current “Nanotechnology and Materials” field should become “Materials (Nanotechnology)” since “Materials” is broad enough to include nanotechnology.

4) “Biomass and Plant Science” shall be divided into “Alternative Energy” and “Agriculture (Food)”. There was a discussion to have the field of “Food” instead of “Agriculture”. However, it was agreed to use “Agriculture” since it is broader than “Food” and can include food, water, forestry and/or biodiversity.

5) For the field of “Health Research (prioritized areas: Infectious Diseases and Cancer Research)”, the SAC members suggested to delete the wording “prioritized areas” because it is already clear enough that these are the prioritized areas.

6) As for the field of “Disaster Prevention”, it is suggested to rename it to

“Disaster Risk Reduction and Management” or “Disaster Risk Reduction”. The former was proposed by the Board and the latter was proposed by JST of Japan. JST expressed their opinion not to include “Management” because “Management” is a concept of risk evaluation and it does not include problem solving by science and technology. Moreover, JST pointed out that the United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (“WCDRR”) also does not have the term “Management” either. On the other hand, there was an opinion that without management, mitigation cannot be done. This depends on the Program’s design to support only pre-disaster research or also to cover post-disaster research. Therefore, the SAC members requested that the Program Secretariat consult the Board whether or not “Management” should be included. If the Program would like to include post-disaster research as supportable, then the name of the field of cooperation shall be “Disaster Risk Reduction and Management”.

7) Rather than establishing “Marine Environment Conservation” as a new field of cooperation, “Environment” is suggested with “Climate Change” and “Marine Sciences” in parentheses. There was an opinion that “Marine Science” could be just a specific topic for one call. However, since many of the countries in the East Asian region are adjacent to marine areas, it is agreed to put emphasis on “Marine Sciences” under the field of “Environment” with “Climate Change”.

## **6. Specific Fields to Focus on Requirements from Society**

1) The Program should focus on requirements from society in all the fields of cooperation. Balancing between state-of-the-art projects and projects that

contribute to the needs from society is important.

2) Projects that cannot directly or immediately contribute to requirements from society should also be accepted. It is necessary to clearly state in the call guidelines that the Program seeks projects that contribute to society in some way and also to ask applicants to write how they can achieve this requirement.

3) Some important topics for the near future that directly relate to societal needs are population aging, mass gathering medicine and bed-side diagnosis. These do not necessarily require state-of-the-art technology. Rather, low-technology, rapidity and low-price are needed, which can be realized through “frugal innovation”.

## **7. Significance of Expanding Collaboration**

1) The involvement of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and Mongolia as new partners in the Program would further strengthen the significance of international collaboration especially in terms of nurturing young talent which is one of the objectives of the Program. At the same time, these countries’ participation should be beneficial to the countries represented by current Member Organizations.

2) Bangladesh has many kinds of water-borne diseases, especially Cholera. They also share several issues in common with the other participating countries, such as having food security problems, being an agricultural country and suffering from flooding. Flooding regularly occurs since most of the land in



Bangladesh is less than nine meters above sea level.

3) Mongolia has rates of Hepatitis infection higher than any other country and its mortality rate is quite high. Moreover, as it is often described as “inaccessible and isolated”, Mongolia is a country with very few people coming and going. This makes the country suitable for research on genetic disorders.

4) Sri Lanka has suffered from many natural disasters such as flooding. Therefore, they have shared challenges with other countries in the East Asian region.

5) From the above reasons 2) to 4), collaborating with these countries is meaningful. Therefore, the Program shall welcome collaboration with them if funding organizations in these countries are interested in participation.

## **8. Others**

1) The Ministry of Health of the Kingdom of Cambodia stated that they would participate in the next call for proposals in the field of “Health Research” by accepting “in-kind” participation of Cambodian researchers.

2) Dr. Bun Sreng of the Ministry of Health of Cambodia explained that the principal problem for researchers in Cambodia was a lack of financial support, making it difficult for researchers to achieve their collaboration goals.

3) The Program Secretariat will collect information on scholarship

programs in each country to find out what kinds of schemes are available for researchers, especially young ones, to visit other countries. While it is difficult for many Member Organizations to fund R&D extramurally, supporting young researchers in the region to go abroad might be possible by having special reserves for the Program in their scholarships.

4) The venue of the third SAC Meeting might be in Manila, the Philippines. The Program Secretariat and the Department of Science and Technology (“DOST”) of the Republic of the Philippines need further discussion on this issue.

**Appendix 1****List of Participants:****SAC Members**

1	Cambodia	Ministry of Health b(MOH)	Dr. Bun Sreng	Deputy-Director
2	Japan	Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST)	Prof. Teruo Kishi	Program Director
3	Myanmar	West Yangon Technological University (WYTU)	Dr. Theingi	Pro-Rector
4	The Philippines	Department of Science and Technology (DOST)	Dr. Rowena Cristina L. Guevara	Undersecretary for S&T Services
5	Thailand	National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA)	Dr. Morakot Tanticharoen	Senior Advisor to President
6	Vietnam	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD)	Dr. Nguyen Thi Thanh Thuy	Director General

**Representatives of their SAC Members**

7	Indonesia	Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education (RISTEK)	Ms. Tiomega Gultom	Deputy Director for Int'l S&T Network
8	Lao P.D.R.	University of Health Sciences (UHS)	Dr. Bounthome Samountry	Vice Dean
9	United States	National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID)	Dr. James M. Meegan	Director of the Office of Global Research

**Other Participants**

10	Thailand	National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA)	Dr. Pattaraporn Suntharasa	Director of International Cooperation
11	Thailand	National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA)	Ms. Orapannee Yuan	Analyst of Cluster & Program Management Division
12	Thailand	National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA)	Ms. Charuwan Panyasiri	International Relations Officer
13	Japan	Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST), Tokyo Head Quarters	Dr. Hideo Nakajima	Manager

**Secretariat**

14	Secretariat / Japan	e-ASIA JRP Secretariat / Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) Singapore Office	Mr. Osamu Kobayashi	Secretary General / Director
15	Secretariat / Japan	e-ASIA JRP Secretariat / Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) Singapore Office	Ms. Eriko Kishida	e-ASIA Special Program Coordinator