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1. Introduction

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The strategic research of the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) for the First Phase started in April 1998 and will end in March 2001. The research projects for the First Phase were prepared by the Preparatory Organization to Establish IGES, which was set up in April 1997. The Preparatory Organization sent research missions to countries in Asia, Europe and the United States to receive opinions from government organizations, international research institutions and NGOs in each country, on how to construct and administer the research organization of IGES, as well as themes and research methods of research projects.

As a result, five research themes of Climate Change, Urban Environmental Management, Forest Conservation, Environmental Education, and Environmental Governance were set up. There were requests to set up a project on the theme of water management, including marine environmental management. But since it was not possible to narrow down research themes in such a wide field in such a short preparatory period, the water management project was not set up in the First Phase. After the establishment of project themes, IGES asked experts in various fields to hold workshops, listened to the opinions of internal and external researchers, and began the process of formulating the content, the methods, research plans, etc., of each project. Furthermore, after the start of IGES, there was the opinion that we ought to carry out crosscutting research for the purpose of establishing long-term goals in order to realize a sustainable society. Thus, the project called New Development Patterns was set up in the second half of the fiscal year 1998.

The Charter for the Establishment of IGES states that the functions of IGES include not only carrying out projects in strategic research, but also capacity building and information collection/dissemination. Therefore, we have also started developing the capacity building and information system programs in the First Phase.

The First Phase of research was planned in this way, and the projects and program has been carried out following the plan. At the end of each fiscal year, we held an informal meeting of the Boards of Directors and Trustees, submitted interim reports about the progress of research and business, and asked the Directors and Trustees for their evaluations and opinions. By the end of the First Phase of research, each project plans to have compiled a comprehensive project report and will receive evaluation by members of the IGES Research Advisory Committee.

The meetings of Boards of Directors and Trustees were held in February 2000, regarding the Second Phase of strategic research (April 2001 to March 2004). The Secretariat including myself as the Chair of the Board of Directors, explained basic ideas of the plans for the Second Phase in both meetings. The themes and contents of each project, expansion of the Capacity Building Program, and establishment and arrangements for the information system obtained an approval by the Board meetings. The details of discussions that took place after the approval at the Board meetings will be described in Section 2, but the fundamental concepts for the research in the Second Phase research are as follows.

First, the Second Phase of research should make use of the research achievements and experiences of the First Phase. The First Phase of research began just after IGES had been founded. There were not enough research staff and the research system was not firmly established. Due to the immaturity of the project plans and the inexperience of project management, IGES had to learn through trial and error. In spite of that, with the hard efforts of the Project Leaders and researchers, precious intellectual wealth has been accumulated throughout the First Phase, such as research data, reports, and cooperative systems with outside research organizations and researchers. The Second Phase of research will inherit this wealth, and make most effective use of it. This means that, projects in the Second Phase will revise and develop the themes of project research of the First Phase as much as possible.

Second, IGES should sufficiently recognize its role as an institute that conducts strategic research, and carry out research bound to practical and problem-solving type of policy proposals, corresponding to the needs of those who have targeted interests (targeted stakeholders). For this purpose, when the research themes are selected, IGES should grasp the needs of those with concerned interests including policy-makers, clearly recognize the aims of researches (targets), and properly narrow down the focus of research. Regarding the development of policies to be proposed, various options should be prepared for each policy or policy method with a clear explanation of their relative predominance, so that they are easy to use for the stakeholders.

Third, in the Second Phase, each project will conduct research by exchanging information with other projects and making cooperative efforts. Furthermore, IGES will establish the Long-Term Perspective and Policy Integration Project as a crosscutting project that integrates the First Phase projects on Environmental Governance and New Development Patterns. It will compile research achievements from various IGES projects with cooperation from members of each project, and at the same time independently gathering proposals for comprehensive environmental policies, with emphasis on Asia towards the World Summit for Sustainable Development (Rio +10 conference) in 2002 (for example, reports on the theme of "Sustainable Development in Asia"). Through these processes, IGES aims at summarizing its research achievements in the Second Phase. Also, there has been the criticism that each project was isolated in the First Phase, and that research went ahead without mutual collaboration. In response, the newly established Long-Term Perspective and Policy Integration Project will focus on points of convergence of each project, and seek to bring together crosscutting themes in a unified and integrated way.

The Second Phase of IGES strategic research plans has been constructed with clear and definite strategies based on collaboration between many stakeholders, including the Program Planning Group and Advisory Group members, the Directors and Trustees, the Project Leaders and research members of the First Phase of the project. With foundations laid in the First Phase, if the plans of the Second Phase are implemented smoothly, IGES should be able to realize its aim of joining the world's top-grade environmental policy research institutions. I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of those concerned who took the trouble and effort to develop plans for the Second Phase of IGES research. We are aware of the great responsibility for carrying out these plans and are determined to make every effort to make the Second Phase research successful.