

PROPOSED NETWORK OF TRAINING INSTITUTIONS ON CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION MEETING

21 MARCH 2019

BANGKOK, THAILAND



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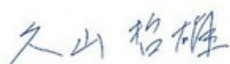
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There has long been a serious lack of capacity in Asia for developing quality project proposals for climate change adaptation that can attract financing. To facilitate scaling up of capacity building, a Network of Training Institutions is being proposed, with the overall goal to “assist countries to meet, and even surpass, the targets outlined in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) by enhancing national capabilities to meet diverse but specific needs – technical, institutional, and policy related”. With a common aim of enhancing adaptation actions in the region towards achieving Paris Agreement and 2030 Development Agenda and under the support of the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), a group of academics and practitioners working on climate change adaptation in Asia-Pacific region came together for an exploratory meeting on 21 March 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand to share their experiences in delivering capacity building programmes, and to explore actions to be taken for initiating the proposed Network of Training Institutions.

Throughout the meeting, the importance of international co-operation in enhancing capacity building actions to utilise climate finance to facilitate and scale up adaptation actions in low-income countries was emphasised. More specifically, it would involve Dialogue, Coordination, Collaboration and Coherence, with the outcomes of yielding bankable proposals and meeting the rising regional needs of fulfilling obligations such as National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), National Adaptation Plans and Actions (NAPAs) and Intended National Determined Contributions (INDCs). International organisations involved in capacity building, including TGO, AIT, ICCCAD, ICIMOD, UNDP and UN Environment, showcased their experiences in various capacity building activities including academic researches and development of training programmes and knowledge dissemination tools, indicating huge potentials of collaborated efforts.

The meeting concluded successfully with positive responses of contributors in agreeing with the aim and functions of the proposed Network and to carry on with the next steps. To sum up, lots of diplomatic and financial commitments have to be made to set up the network, requiring continued technical support from scientific bodies, policy support from governments and financial support from donors. To serve this purpose, IGES would coordinate a larger scale planning meeting to be held in later 2019 to discuss on the concrete steps.



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OVERVIEW



With climate change being a global threat to mankind and adaptation of huge urgency particularly in the developing world, there has been increasing focus on adaptation commitments in international negotiations, with the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Developmental Agenda giving particular emphasis on climate resilient development. New obligations such as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) being set up to be met by countries worldwide, not only include mitigation aspirations but also increasingly contain adaptation plans. Climate finance has been emerging at an unprecedented scale, including but not limited to the Green Climate Fund (GCF), Adaptation Fund (AF), Global Environment Facility (GEF), multilateral development banks and bilateral agencies, but adaptation funding is still inadequate.

Despite the region's vulnerability to climate change, there is a serious lack of capacity in Asia for developing quality project proposals for climate change adaptation that can attract financing, which largely hinders implementation of Paris Agreement and the 2030 Development Agenda. Capacity building programmes are needed so that local stakeholders can design, implement and monitor Asian solutions for Asia's climate change challenges, drawing on regional as well as global knowledge and experience, eventually achieving a move from policy to action. In particular, capacity building to access the increasing availability of climate finance with bankable projects and to select optimal technologies will be critical in the Asia-Pacific region. In January 2016, the Climate Change Asia initiative was launched at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) with the aim of meeting these capacity building needs, yet this initiative is facing enormous challenges when attempting to scale up, and is unable to meet the overwhelming demand from the adaptation community in the region.

To facilitate scaling up of capacity building, a Network of Training Institutions is being proposed, with the overall goal to "assist countries to meet, and even surpass, the targets outlined in their NDCs by enhancing national capabilities to meet diverse but specific needs - technical, institutional, and policy related". More specifically, a strong cadre of government officials, private sector managers, NGOs and other key actors would be trained on identifying and managing climate change responses and accessing the necessary financial and other resources to implement these responses, while climate change training capacity of institutions would be enhanced. The goal is to be achieved through three work programmes - knowledge enhancement, project development, and on-the-job mentoring.

With a common aim of enhancing adaptation actions in the region and under the support of the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), a group of academics and practitioners working on climate change adaptation in Asia-Pacific region came together for a meeting on 21 March 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand to share their experiences in delivering capacity building programmes, and to explore actions to be taken for initiating the proposed Network of Training Institutions.

1. WELCOME AND OBJECTIVES



To kick-off the meeting, **Dr. Bindu Lohani, Head of Global Climate Change Practice, Emerging Market Forum, Washington D.C., USA and Member of Board of Trustees, AIT and IGES** welcomed the participants by addressing the importance of project development training, which has already been in place for decades. With the necessity of mainstreaming climate change impacts into projects, a good opportunity to revitalise such training is offered. Dr. Lohani emphasised some areas where training should be provided including data-driven research, climate modelling, vulnerability assessment and informed decision making. Furthermore, under the increasing needs of adaptation and the necessity to scale up climate change adaptation projects, more effort is required to utilise climate finance to facilitate adaptation actions in low-income countries.

Mr. Tetsuo Kuyama, Director of IGES Bangkok Regional Centre gave another welcoming remark by highlighting the importance of climate change adaptation under the worsening of climatic conditions in recent years. With a common aim of enhancing capacity building activities in the region towards achieving Paris Agreement and 2030 Development Agenda, Mr. Kuyama believed that international co-operation is the key to create a good outcome.



To follow the welcoming remarks, **Dr. Peter King, Senior Policy Advisor from IGES** introduced the proposed Training Network by discussing first the necessity of scaling up capacity building actions to facilitate bankable projects and subsequently the opportunities offered by the proposed Network, which could be summed up into Dialogue, Coordination, Collaboration and Coherence, with the outcomes of yielding bankable proposals and meeting the rising regional needs of fulfilling obligations such as National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), National Adaptation Plans and Actions (NAPAs) and Intended National Determined

Contributions (INDCs). Dr. King claimed that the capacity building demand could be found in every workplace, ranging from governmental and non-governmental agencies to development banks and private companies in all sectors affected by climate change. Such capacity building includes dissemination of background knowledge, facilitation of project development and post-training mentoring, and in some cases, project implementation. Dr. King was hopeful that under the technical and financial support of Japanese government, preparatory activities leading to establishment of the training network would be carried out in coming years, with great flexibility allowing meeting participants to decide the details.



Mr. Jens Radschinski, Head of UNFCCC Regional Collaboration Centre (RCC) in Bangkok, gave a Keynote Presentation which highlights the duties of RCC in climate change mitigation through stakeholder engagement to facilitate implementation of Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), Nationally-Determined Contributions (NDCs), and Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV), and climate finance, among other measures. A few adaptation-related activities were mentioned, such as a collaboration with Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) on a

training-to-trainer workshop on climate change and disaster risk management. Mr. Radschinski anticipated that RCC could potentially play a bigger role in climate change adaptation in the future under the umbrella of Paris Agreement implementation, in coordination with other parts of UNFCCC Secretariat in charge of capacity building programmes in adaptation.

2. MORNING PRESENTATIONS

Ms. Chayathorn Thanawattanamrong, Technical Expert from Thailand Greenhouse Gas Organisation (TGO)

introduced the Climate Change International Technical and Training Center (CITC), which has served as a provider of training courses for Thai and ASEAN climate change practitioners ranging from government officials to academic, public and private sectors for almost five years, with aims of both knowledge dissemination and collaboration. A number of topics taught are relevant to climate change adaptation, including water resources management, and climate impact management. Some interactive scenes of training courses were displayed. Ms. Thanawattanamrong concluded his presentation by delivering CITC's plan of organising a training workshop on climate change adaptation for ASEAN participants in September 2019. Dr. Koji Fukuda from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), which is assisting TGO, added that the planned workshop would focus on evidence-based planning, vulnerability assessment and loss-and-damage in certain sectors for formulation of project proposals, with peer learning to be engaged.

A participant raised a question on whether the courses were delivered in Thai or English, Ms. Thanawattanamrong responded that courses for Thai participants were delivered in Thai while those for ASEAN participants were delivered in English. Another participant asked whether training materials and curriculum could be shared to participants, Ms. Thanawattanamrong answered that the lecture materials have already been put on a website, but in some cases they are password-protected. Dr. Babel at AIT asked about the source of finance of the training courses, Ms. Thanawattanamrong replied that the course is supported by Thai government, and some additional support from JICA would be provided for the upcoming ASEAN course.





Dr. Mukand S. Babel, Professor, Water Engineering and Management at Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) and Chair of Climate Change Asia presented the experience of AIT in capacity building on climate change in Asia. He started his presentation by stressing that “capacity building is not only about training courses”, and AIT’s role in academic research and knowledge generation provides input of case studies in training programmes. He showcased climate change–relevant research projects and training courses held in AIT, supported and partnered with multiple agencies

across the Asia-Pacific region. The research activities were conducted by Masters and Doctoral students, comprising climate change impacts on water, agricultural and urban sectors and possible adaptation measures. The latter part of Dr. Babel’s presentation was on AIT’s involvement in Climate Technology Centre Network (CTCN), a capacity building arm of UNFCCC delivering training programmes technology assessments across Asia and Africa. Prof. Babel concluded his presentation by pinpointing two main challenges of capacity building – post-training mentoring and identification of common technical capacity needs.



Mr. Naoko Tsukamoto, Director of Regional Resource Centre for Asia and the Pacific at Asian Institute of Technology (AIT RRC.AP), first illustrated the ongoing challenges of climate finance including a lack of sufficient finance, most finance directing to international entities which could not be directly accessed by national implementing entities, and most importantly the inadequate support for proposal development to potential project participants. Mr. Tsukamoto then presented the experience of the Climate Change Cluster of RRC.AP in capacity building, particularly through strengthening access to climate finance by means of organising training programmes and knowledge sharing events under the Climate Change Asia Initiative, and developing knowledge products. The training programmes have already facilitated elaboration of more than 20 GCF concept notes, and there are plans to further enhance engagement and downscale services to national and local levels, and work with other organisations for joint training programmes and post-training mentoring.

Dr. King raised whether RRC.AP has plans to incorporate research in AIT into training curriculum, the speaker responded that sector-specific training programmes could be developed in the future to utilise such research. Dr. Babel added that the main issue is whether finance should be demand-driven or supply-driven, and the speaker responded that training programmes set up a match-making process between demand (projects on the ground) and supply (available funds).

Mr. Sarder Alam, Coordinator, Urban Climate Change Programme from International Centre on Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) gave an account of ICCCAD’s capacity building activities and network. Capacity building services of ICCCAD include Masters course and short courses, the former attracted students from over 50 countries while around 5,000 climate change practitioners from various sectors have benefited from the latter. Finally, Mr. Alam highlighted the importance of ICCCAD’s role in leading network building among institutions based in developing countries.



Dr. Dhruvad Choudhury, Chief, Scaling Operations from International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) introduced ICIMOD’s regional programmes which are largely relevant to climate change adaptation, with emphasis given to ecosystem services, river basin management and community-based adaptation in mountainous regions. In short, ICIMOD has been offering research on climate projections and impacts, technical support for National Adaptation Plans and vulnerability assessments, and publications on climate resilient agriculture and gender issues. Dr. Choudhury also outlined the capacity building efforts of SERVIR-HKH Programme, supported by USAID, ranging from operating training courses to publishing training manuals.



Ms. Rohini Kohli, Lead Technical Specialist, National Adaptation Plan - Global Support Programme from UN Development Programme (UNDP) outlined UNDP’s role in assisting governments to develop NAPs and NAPAs among other institutional frameworks to mainstream adaptation into development planning at national and local levels. Ms. Kohli showcased training ranging from ecosystem-based adaptation to coastal management, emphasising data provision, technology demonstration, mobilisation of policy instruments and commercialisation support. The presentation was concluded with some successful tips of capacity building, including mutual learning, cross-institutional exchanges, training-of-trainers and post-training follow-up.



The last presentation in the morning was given by Mr. Mozaharul Alam, Regional Coordinator - Climate Change Asia and the Pacific Office from UN Environment. Mr. Alam stressed that UN Environment adopts strategic solutions to assist countries to build institutional capacities mainstream climate change adaptation into development plans and budgets beyond training courses. Still, some training programmes by UNEP, such as UNEP-UNDP National Adaptation Plan Global Support Programme, with the aim of advancing understanding on medium and long-term adaptation planning, were showcased. The training delivered by this Programme focuses on critical aspects of various sectors, vulnerability assessment at different scales and narrative-building. To sum up, although UN Environment is not a training institution itself, they could develop partnerships with Universities and other UN agencies to serve the training purpose.

3. AFTERNOON PRESENTATIONS

In the afternoon, **Mr. Osamu Mizuno, Principal Fellow from IGES** presented AP-PLAT, to be established by the Ministry of Environment of Japan (MOEJ) in 2020, which was fostered by the new Climate Change Adaptation Act in Japan. On the basis of fostering bottom-up adaptation actions under an uncertain future climatic state, Mr. Mizuno stressed that AP-PLAT would be supported by three pillars, including scientific information and knowledge, adaptation tools and capacity building, complementing each other to facilitate informed decision making and bankable actions. In particular, priority would be given to tool development and training related to management of climate risk information.



A participant asked about the data source for climate change impacts, the speaker responded that some climate change impact assessments at provincial scale have been conducted by Thai institutions, and efforts are needed to downscale the impacts to local scale. Dr. Babel agreed to provide some case studies from water resources management to enrich the website content. Another participant suggested that some Thai-JICA collaborative research, such as evaluation of landslide risk, among others, could be added onto the website as well. At the end of this session, Dr. King mentioned a similar platform (I-PLAT) to be established by Indonesian government.



The final presentation of the day was given by **Mr. Teerapong Laopongpith, Environmentalist, Professional Level from Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP)** outlined T-PLAT, which would be supported by MOEJ with a linkage to AP-PLAT, having a vision of enhancing climate risk information across the Asia-Pacific region. The presenter then shared the proposed structure and timeline launching the T-PLAT website. Some contents of the website would be translated to English to serve stakeholders outside Thailand. The speaker welcomed other meeting participants to add value, particularly research elements, onto the website.

3. BRAINSTORMING SESSION

Group 1

Dr. Babel presented the outcomes of Discussion Group 1, which discussed the establishment of a training institute network, coordination and governance, and climate finance. The group reached a consensus that capacity building includes training courses and beyond – while training courses serve to provide short to medium term benefits, long term capacity building should be driven by research and development, to be carried out by universities, research institutes as well as UNDP and UN Environment. Curriculum must be prepared under a peer-review process and should be shared among network members. The network should also serve to identify capacity gaps.

As for coordination and governance, it was agreed that the network could initially be established informally, with efforts to be made to define responsibilities of each network member and expand the reach. It was suggested that Climate Change Asia hosted in AIT, IGES or UNFCCC RCC could be the coordinator of the network, possibly with a regional centre being established in Bangkok, Thailand.

Regarding funding opportunities, it was agreed that the main source of finance would be adaptation funds, yet some mitigation funds could be incorporated to allow synergies. Sources of finance could possibly include philanthropic funds such as Rockefeller Foundation. Sharing of financial resources among the institutes would be based on availability of funds and project type. A suggestion was made to approach the Paris Committee on Capacity Building (PCCB) to assess training and financial needs.



Group 2



Ms. Kohli presented the outcome of Discussion Group 2, where every group member was supportive towards the establishment of training network as this would be the first network of this kind in Asia-Pacific region.

Group members agreed that the network would facilitate coordination of experts in various thematic areas, scoping of training contents, collaboration with international bodies, donors and private sectors, exchange of training materials, and improvement of quality of training. Furthermore, the network would benefit trainees through post-training mentoring, tailored knowledge dissemination, broadened scope of trainees, specialised training and local language training. Network members should be clear about information sharing rules and scoping of functions, where a concept note or a secretariat could be established to clear these issues.

Financing of the network could be a challenge and mechanisms have to be established to blend various sources of finance.



Group 3

Dr. Jonathan Shaw, Deputy Director and Mr. Winston Chow, Head of Climate Change Cluster, both from AIT RRC.AP, presented the outcome of Discussion Group 3, where members agreed that more ambitious efforts have to be undertaken to engage all relevant private stakeholders, such as agricultural enterprises, engineering companies and real estate developers, allowing them to mainstream adaptation into project planning which informs better business decisions and possibly alters market practices towards incentivising further adaptation actions.

Realising that development of training curriculum and digital marketing campaigns share a common term – both requiring translation of research outputs into readily digestible formats in layman terms, the group also agreed upon that the proposed network could take part in external communications, more specifically social media campaigns and digital marketing, to raise public awareness and consequently scale up adaptation actions.

Lastly, the group concluded that sources of finance could include national development banks and green bonds, the proposed training network could approach existing like-minded initiatives such as C40 and RE100 for their assistance in curriculum development, and Singapore could be a feasible location where training could be based, given strong support from the government.



Questions and answer

Question: How a "Regional Centre" should be defined?

Answer: **Dr. King** responded that a regional centre refers to a coordinating body guiding capacity building work and finance for a sub-region; an example would be the Pacific Climate Change Centre based at the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), while TGO has an ambition to assume this role for ASEAN countries.

Dr. Babel questioned whether there is a need for regional climate centres.

Dr. Shaw and Dr. Choudhury responded that the main purpose of regional collaboration is to ensure coherence and consistence through sharing of materials, yet collaborators should learn a lesson from the ineffectiveness of Asia Pacific Adaptation Network (APAN), that scoping of network function, including identification of stakeholders and strategic communication, should be done upon establishment of network.

Finally, **Dr. Lohani and Dr. King** clarified that the regional centres should be part of the network of training institutions and knowledge institutions providing lifelong learning opportunities. While respective training institutions often find full implementation of climate change adaptation projects difficult even when funding is available, collaborative action would facilitate scaling-up of efforts thus easing implementation.



5. CONCLUSIONS

A round-up session led by **Dr. Bindu Lohani and Dr. Peter King** enabled participants to come up with the next steps towards establishing a network of training institutions. Dr. Lohani opened the session by appreciating the positive attitudes of participants in agreeing to carry on with the next steps and highlighting the importance of utilisation of climate information relevant to adaptation actions and with the help of adaptation platforms (like AP-PLAT) this has become a possibility. A lot of political and financial commitments have to be made regarding local level adaptation, requiring continued collaboration between scientific bodies and public agencies, with Japan setting a good example how this could be carried out. Dr. King stressed that collective actions are always more effective than the sum of individual counterparts as scaling up of actions and more coordinated actions are enabled, which justifies the establishment of training network. Continued efforts would be needed to engage more training institutions in the region as well as the private sector and donors. IGES would coordinate a larger scale planning meeting to be held in later 2019, with respective responsibilities of partners involved to be identified over the next few months. Participants agreed to form a small working group to facilitate preparation of this planning meeting.



6. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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