

## **“IGES, START and their Regional Partners to Establish a Consortium for Advancing the Circulating and Ecological Sphere (CES) Concept in South and Southeast Asia”**

Today, the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), START International, Inc. together with several leading academic and research institutes in South and Southeast Asia, signed an agreement to establish a consortium for advancing the Circulating and Ecological Sphere (CES) concept, with the aim of building resilience in city regions across South and Southeast Asia. Joining the consortium are Visvesvaraya National Institute of Technology (India), Faculty of Architecture and Planning, Thammasat University (Thailand), University of Dhaka (Bangladesh), University of Da Nang – University of Science and Education (Viet Nam), Royal Thimphu College (Bhutan), University of Indonesia, Ateneo de Manila University (the Philippines) and Institute of Forestry of Tribhuvan University (Nepal).

The consortium will jointly work to advance research and capacity building that strengthens understanding and promotes utilisation of the CES concept, in order to address sustainability challenges in South and Southeast Asia.

### **Background**

City regions in Asia face enormous social, political, economic and environmental challenges, stemming from resource overconsumption, environmental degradation, population pressures, climate change, and deeply entrenched inequalities, among others. Tackling these sustainability challenges requires addressing the adverse effects of incoherent policymaking and uncoordinated development planning and practices. More attention needs to be given to city- and regional-level solutions by developing and applying approaches that are suitable for dealing with complexities inherent within the urban-rural continuum.

The Circulating and Ecological Sphere (CES) approach applies spatial integration of urban/peri-urban/rural interdependencies to address complex social, environmental and economic sustainability challenges together. A key aspect of fostering the CES concept is the creation of a framework of continuous iterative cycles between scientific evidence-based knowledge generation, regional knowledge sharing, capacity building of key actors and co-design of solutions. Such approaches should be truly participatory and promote long-term processes and dialogue. Enabling such a process requires a multi-city effort built around a platform with reflective, cross-city learning. The first regional workshop on the Circulating and Ecological Sphere Approach for Re-designing the City Regions Resilient was held on 20-21 May 2021. It highlighted the need for a regional partnership to advance the CES approach in Asia, and participants agreed to establish a consortium on CES in Asia. This consortium will work as a regional platform whereby universities and research institutes work with cities to co-develop research plans and priorities that incorporate and adapt key elements of the CES framework, shaped by the context of specific local needs and priorities.

### **About the Circulating and Ecological Sphere**

The Circulating and Ecological Sphere (CES) focuses on developing the SDGs at the regional and local levels and integrating the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Put forward in the Fifth Basic Environment Plan that was approved by the Japanese Cabinet in 2018, the CES invites regions and localities to rediscover their untapped potential to create sustainable communities by encouraging stronger urban-rural connectivity. It does so by promoting a circular economy, creating a symbiotic society in harmony with nature, and achieving a decarbonised, self-reliant and decentralised society.

For more information please contact:

Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)

Yuri Katsuike

Tel: +81-80-7410-1620

Email: iges\_pr@iges.or.jp

### **START International, Inc.**



Since 1992, START has promoted science capacity development that advances knowledge and action on critical sustainability issues. Its programs and partnerships provide opportunities for training, research, education and networking that strengthen scientific skills and inspire leadership for advancing solutions to critical sustainability challenges. For more information, please visit [here](#).

### **Visvesvaraya National Institute of Technology**



Visvesvaraya National Institute of Technology is one of the Centrally Funded Technical Institutes established by the Government of India, having its office in Maharashtra, India. For more information, please visit [here](#).

### **Faculty of Architecture and Planning, Thammasat University**



The Faculty of Architecture and Planning, Thammasat University aims to become a regional leading design institution with the identity of innovation for society and environment. The Faculty has implemented the strategies to reflect the value leading to changes and challenges to the world. This will lead to the main duty in education and research including three sections which are Collaborative Design Process (Setting New Mainstream), Stimulate Creative Dialogue (Telling the World) and Technology-Driven. For more information, please visit [here](#).

### University of Dhaka



Founded in 1921, The University of Dhaka has been a centre of excellence while uplifting the educational standards of the people of the region. It was initially meant to provide tertiary education to people who didn't have access to higher studies till then. Subsequently, it has contributed significantly to the socio-cultural and political development of what was once East Bengal and then East Pakistan, and is now Bangladesh. However, the University of Dhaka, country's largest and oldest public university, hosts around 100 departments, 13 faculties, 40,000 students and 2000 faculty members. The University of Dhaka currently (2021) celebrates 100 years of establishment. Please visit [here](#).

### The University of Danang – University of Science and Education



The University of Danang – University of Science and Education is one of the seven most prominent teacher training institutions nationwide. It is a multi-disciplinary, multi-level university with seven functional departments, twelve faculties, three centres and three divisions. It offers programs in fields of educational science, natural science and social science and humanity. For more information, please visit [here](#).

### Royal Thimphu College



Royal Thimphu College (RTC) is an academic institute of Bhutan and having its principal office in Thimphu, Bhutan. It is affiliated to the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) and the Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences (KGUMSB). Founded in 2009, RTC seeks to become an institution of academic excellence that sets inspiring standard for education by challenging its students to achieve their full potential and to become independent life-long learners and well-rounded, responsible citizens. For the first time, since its inception in 2009, RTC was accredited by the Bhutan Accreditation Council in 2016 and was awarded A+ (Excellent) grade. For more information, please visit [here](#).

### University of Indonesia



University of Indonesia (UI) is a public university that located in Depok, West Java and Salemba, Central Jakarta, Indonesia. UI is one of the oldest higher educational institutions and generally considered one of the most prestigious universities in Indonesia. The University consists of 14 faculties and 2 schools providing courses at undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate levels. With 291 academic programs,. For more information, please visit [here](#).

### Ateneo de Manila University



Ateneo de Manila University (founded 1859) is a Filipino, Catholic, and Jesuit institution of higher learning based in Quezon City, Philippines. For more than 160 years, Ateneo has played a significant part in shaping the Philippine nation, with thousands of its alumni contributing to the country's economic, social, political, and cultural development. Its 12 component schools and array of research centers form one of the world's most exciting communities of academics, scholars, and leaders in the arts and humanities, science and engineering, business, law, education, medicine and public health, and governance. The Ateneo commitment is to become light in the world, seeking the truth to illuminate and to serve. For more information, please visit [here](#).

**Institute of Forestry, Tribhuvan University**



Institute of Forestry, Tribhuvan University (IOF-TU) is a Public University established first in Nepal for producing competent forestry professionals in Nepal. Additional responsibilities of this institute include forestry research and the development of technology suitable to Nepal. The IOF-TU was established in 1976 under the Government of Nepal. IOF-TU coordinates several international, regional and national research initiatives in the areas of forest, green economy, wildlife, mountain development, community forestry and so on jointly with both Western Universities and Asian Universities. IOF-TU dean office is in Kathmandu, Nepal. For more information, please visit [here](#).

**Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)**



The Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) is a collaborative research and outreach organisation working to accelerate the transition to a sustainable, resilient, shared, and inclusive Asia-Pacific region, both across borders and within the world at large.

Our strategic research and operations are defined by a mission- to drive action on the world's most critical environmental and social challenges through the delivery of trusted expertise on sustainable development and resilience.

IGES operates as an agent of change. Together with key international organisations, governments, academic institutes, business and civil society leaders we seek to foster a world where planetary boundaries are fully respected, a green economy is flexibly implemented, and the well-being of people is steadily improved. In so doing we emphasise workable and inspired approaches to cross-cutting global development issues ranging from climate change, natural resources and ecosystems management, and sustainable consumption and production, among many others.

The Institute - established in 1998 with support from the Japanese government and Kanagawa Prefecture - maintains its international headquarters in Hayama, Japan. With offices and local centres in Tokyo, Kansai, Kitakyushu, Beijing, Bangkok, and New Delhi, IGES supports a regional and global network for ground breaking sustainable development research and practice. For more information, please visit [here](#).