CAINEWSLETTER CLEAN ASIA INITIATIVE (CAI)

MARCH 2020 vol. 19



Japan's Initiative for a Decarbonized Society

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The 25th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change | COP25

In an environment marked by a sense of crisis over the issue of climate change, the Paris Agreement was adopted as a new international framework in which all nations participate, at the 21 st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21) held in Paris, France in December 2015. With the start of implementation of the Paris Agreement in 2020, this is an opportunity to provide an overview of the outcomes of COP25 held in Madrid, Spain in December 2019 as global trends on climate change.

Overview of COP25

One of the highlights of the COP25 negotiations was implementation guidelines for market mechanisms that had not been agreed on at COP24. Drawing upon its experience with the Joint Crediting Mechanisms (JCM) with a track record of over 160 projects, Japan conducted negotiations on implementation guidelines for market mechanisms, calling for the avoidance double-counting emission of reductions and securing environmental integrity. Japan also negotiated intensively, conducting more than 30 high-level bilateral meetings with other Ministers/Representatives, the Secretary-General of the UN, and the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC.

The curtain fell at COP25 with no agreement on implementation guidelines for market mechanisms; however, with the progress that has been made, negotiations will continue next year at COP26, where Japan will develop draft implementation guidelines containing content that will assert the promotion of the use and improvement of the JCM.

Japan maximized every opportunity to introduce the country's achievements and initiatives at COP25, including in statements by government representatives, at press conferences, various side events, bilateral consultations with other ministers and meetings with stakeholders. Specifically, Japan made announcements on its achievement in reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for the fifth consecutive year, increasing the number of local governments with the net-zero declaration by 2050 from 4 to 28 (45 million people, more than California and closing in on Spain) as the actions of non-state actors are becoming critical to climate change measures (*as of March 30, 2020, 87 municipalities, population of about 62 million, which is about 49% of Japan's total population), Japan's TCFD (Task Force on Climaterelated Financial Disclosures) which has the largest number of supporting companies and organizations in the world, with among the highest number of SBT^{*1} target setting companies and RE100^{*2} member companies, and an announcement by Keidanren (Japan Business Federation) on the "Challenge Zero" initiative.

Calling for the participation of all countries, Japan also declared its intent to launch the Initiative on Fluorocarbons Life Cycle Management taking the lead in globally implementing measures to control emissions throughout the entire fluorocarbon lifecycle. Japan also shared the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision, aiming to reduce additional pollution from marine plastic litter to zero by 2050, with countries including those not in the G20.

*1 SBT is an acronym for "Science Based Targets", which are GHG emission reduction targets set by companies with a target year of five to 15 years in the future that are consistent with standards required by the Paris Agreement (aim to keep global temperature rise well below 2°C and limit temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels) (Source) https://www.env.go.jp/earth/ondanka/supply_chain/gvc/intr_trends.html#no07

*2 Corporate collaborative initiative with companies committing to a goal of supplying electricity generated from 100% renewable energy for use in business

Initiative on Fluorocarbons Life Cycle Management

At the COP25 Japan Pavilion, Koizumi Shinjiro, Minister of the Environment of Japan, declared the launch of a global Initiative on Fluorocarbons Life Cycle Management (IFL). While there are international frameworks for upstream measures in the lifecycle of fluorocarbons, namely, a reduction in the production of fluorocarbons, such as the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer under the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, there have been, until now, no frameworks focusing on recovering used fluorocarbons, which is a downstream measure in the lifecycle of fluorocarbons. This initiative is the world's first international framework for the recovery and treatment of fluorocarbons from equipment used as a refrigerant for air conditioners and refrigerators that are known to be ozone-depleting substances and causes of GHGs.

Measures to reduce fluorocarbons, which are widely used as refrigerants for refrigerators and air conditioners, are critical in terms of both protecting the ozone and addressing climate change since they have an effect on the depletion of the ozone layer and a powerful greenhouse effect. There are estimates that sales of air conditioners around the world will continue to increase at a rate of 10 units per second over the next 30 years, making it even more important to take action to control the emission of fluorocarbons throughout their lifecycle, including leakage during use and air emissions during disposal. However, more than 100 countries around the world do not have targets for fluorocarbons measures, including from the perspective of lifecycle management.

As of February 2020, seven countries other than Japan (Chile, France, Maldives, Mongolia, New Zealand, Singapore, and Viet Nam) and three international organizations (the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, CCAC (Climate and Clean Air Coalition)), as well as 10 organizations and companies in Japan have expressed support for this initiative. In the future, Japan will organize international conferences to share existing efforts, activities and best practices and link these to the implementation of concrete projects to expand the circle of support among countries and promote the lifecycle management of fluorocarbons.



The JCM Partner Countries' High-Level Meeting

The 7th JCM partner countries' high-level meeting was held at the Japan Pavilion for COP25 on December 12, 2019. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM) partner countries including Koiuzumi Shinjiro, Minister of the Environment, Japan; Shahab Uddin, Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bangladesh; and BATJARGAL Zamba, Special Envoy of Mongolia on Climate Change.

Minister Koizumi highlighted the JCM as a pioneering mechanism under Article 6, paragraph 2 of the Paris Agreement, which contributing not only to mitigation but also to sustainable development of partner countries with a track record of over 160 projects. As a new initiative, he announced the introduction of guidelines on gender for selecting JCM model projects. The partner countries welcomed the recent development of the JCM.



Carbon Neutrality Coalition Ministerial Event

he meeting of the Carbon Neutrality Coalition, a group of countries that committed to take leading actions to achieve decarbonization in the future, was organized on December 11, 2019. Japan had already announced that it would join the Coalition in September 2019 on the occasion of a meeting between Jacinta Ardern, the Prime Minister of New Zealand and Koizumi Shinjiro, Minister of the Environment, Japan.

At the event, Minister Koizumi stated that Japan is the first G7 member to declare carbon neutrality in its longterm strategy, and that non-state actors such as local governments and the private sector are accelerating actions and other actions taken in Japan. The Republic of Korea, which on this occasion announced its intent to participate in the Coalition, expressed its appreciation for the support extended by Minister Koizumi for its participation.

Efforts in Japan and abroad to achieve the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision



With an aim to reduce additional pollution by marine plastic litter to zero by 2050, the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision was shared among G20 leaders at the G20 Osaka Summit in June 2019 to solve the global issue of marine plastic litter. This shared vision of a united G20, including emerging and developing nations, was a major step forward in solving this urgent problem. In addition to amassing scientific knowledge and taking the lead in global efforts, Japan is moving forward to strengthen measures within its own borders, as much of the waste that washes ashore along the coasts of Japan is generated not only internationally, but also domestically.

7 Follow-up and expansion of the vision based on the G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter

To realize the Osaka Blue Ocean Vison, the G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter was established upon at the relevant ministerial meeting and endorsed at the G20 Osaka Summit. The framework promotes measures and policies in each country through continuous sharing and updating of information and providing opportunities for mutual learning. The first follow-up meeting based on the framework was held in Tokyo in October 2019. The outcomes of the meeting resulted in the compilation of a report on the G20 Actions on Marine Plastic Litter with best practices and relevant information reported by each country. In addition, Japan has taken the initiative to launch the world's first portal site on marine plastic litter so that each country can easily update information on their actions.

Furthermore, Japan will continue to follow-up on these efforts and expand its circle of activities beyond the G20 to Asia and other areas throughout the world. For example, at UNFCCC COP25 in 2019, Japan organized a side event named "Osaka Blue Ocean Vision Round Table" to share the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision with participating countries, including those not in the G20. Through such side events and bilateral talks, Japan has put out a direct call to ministers and leaders, including nine countries other than the G20, and has now expanded the vision to 59 countries (as of March 2020).

2 Support for ASEAN member states

ASEAN member states are presumed to be major emitters of marine plastic litter. There are some countries that lack capacity for proper waste management and understanding of actual status of land-based litter, and policies or actions plans in place to promote them. The Ministry of the Environment, Japan (MOEJ) provides support on policy aspects, such as the formulation of national action plans, as well as technical assistance to understand the current situation in order to address these issues.

Japan is taking the lead in international harmonization of

3 Promotion of actions in Japan

In May 2019, as a way to tackle marine plastics, the Government of Japan formulated the Resource Circulation Strategy for Plastics which sets out Japan's milestones for circulating plastic resources, and implements the National Action Plan for Marine Plastic Litter which is a compilation of specific measures in Japan, as well as amending the Basic Policy built on the Act on Promoting the Treatment of Articles that Drift monitoring methods for floating microplastics and published "the Guidelines for Harmonizing Ocean Surface Microplastic Monitoring Methods" in May 2019. Based on these guidelines, Japan began a program inviting trainees to learn about monitoring techniques. In FY2019, Indonesia and other countries participated in the program.

In addition to the use of the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund to support the formulation of national action plans, the Regional Knowledge Centre for Marine Plastic Debris was established at the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) in October 2019, which functions as an hub to collect information and form networks, share good practices and build capacity on marine plastic waste to contribute to policy planning and implementation in each country.

Ashore. With this progress, Japan is leading the world in the fight against plastic litter with the comprehensive and strong promotion of various measures. These include reforming lifestyles starting with the introduction of fees for plastic shopping bags, establishing resource recycling systems by providing support to improve recycling facilities and equipment, as well as ensuring thorough separation of waste and proper disposal by proper implementation of regulations on littering and illegal dumping, collecting marine litter, material innovations through the development and conversion of alternatives, and collaborating with stakeholders.

Aiming to build a decarbonized society

Eighty-seven local and regional governments of Japan have declared net zero carbon emission

Map of 2050 Zero Carbon Cities



Local and regional governments (LRGs) are the key players in the planning and implementation of practical climate actions and projects at local level. The Paris Agreement recognizes the importance of accelerating climate actions by non-state actors including LRGs and cities in addition to the central government, and climate actions by LRGs have also been growing internationally.

In Japan, the number of LRGs that declared their commitments to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050 has been increasing. In September 2019, four local governments with a total population of 20 million committed to net zero emissions, including Tokyo, Kyoto, and Yokohama. Responding to the call of Koizumi Shinjiro, the Minister of the Environment, in view of the growing sense of crisis on climate change due to the extreme severity of disasters such as typhoons, the number of cities declaring zero-carbon has increased to 87, representing 62 million people (49.2% of total population of Japan) as of March 30, 2020.

Considering that ambitious actions by these LRGs could be the driving force for positive actions by the national government and the private sector, MOEJ will continue the call for LRG's to participate in the zero-carbon city initiative and take practical actions for realizing a decarbonized society by providing the necessary support to those LRGs declaring their commitment to net-zero emissions so they can strengthen their mitigation actions, as well as by organizing a forum of the heads of LRGs in and outside of Japan.



Initiatives in Circular and Ecological Economy

Local governmental cooperation on renewable energy to achieve Zero Carbon Yokohama

"Circular and Ecological Economy" (CEE) is a concept that aims to develop self-reliant and decentralized societies by leveraging regional resources, such as beautiful natural landscapes, and maximizing regional vitality by taking advantage of these various resources while complementing and supporting other areas. This page features an introduction of the case of Yokohama City as an advanced approach in Japan in relation to the CEE.



In October 2018, Yokohama City revised its Action Plan for Global Warming Countermeasures and set a target to reduce GHG emissions to net zero by 2050. To achieve this "Zero Carbon Yokohama" plan, it is necessary to promote the conversion to renewable energy and thoroughly conserve energy. However, the amount of renewable energy that can be found in the city area is limited in relation to the amount required, meaning that wide-area cooperation is needed to achieve this goal.

For this reason, Yokohama City concluded a collaborative agreement in February 2019 on renewable energy with 12 municipalities in three prefectures in the Tohoku area that have an abundance

renewable of energy resources (Yokohama Town in Aomori Prefecture; Kuji City, Ninohe City, Kuzumaki Town, Fudai Village, Karumai Town, Noda Village, Kunohe Village, Hirono Town, and Ichinohe Town in Iwate Prefecture; and Aizuwakamatsu City and Koriyama City in Fukushima Prefecture) with the aim of achieving a decarbonized society. The potential amount of power generated from renewable energy, such as solar, wind and biomass sources, by these 12 municipalities in Tohoku is estimated to be about 75 billion kWh, which is about four times the amount of power consumed annually in Yokohama City. Through this agreement, Yokohama City aims to achieve the creation of a decarbonized society by strengthening collaboration on renewable energy and mutual collaboration based on the CEE concept. This is the largest partnership of its kind in Japan.

Under this agreement, Yokohama City is examining an implementation scheme that includes policy recommendations to the national government and other bodies and is developing a new model for an urban and rural CEE using renewable energy to "provide renewable energy" by utilizing the potential of renewable energy from partner municipalities and "create local vitality" by revitalizing interactions with residents and businesses. This is expected to have a ripple effect on other municipalities in the future.

A case outside of Japan

Applying the CEE concept in Nagpur, India

A joint-research project that aims to promote the CEE concept to deal with the water crisis in Nagpur Metropolitan Area has been carried out by the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), Visvesvaraya National Institute of Technology (VNIT), and Keio University The joint research looked in detail at local needs, with researchers and key stakeholders in Nagpur City and surrounding peri-urban and rural areas conducting studies to understand water linkages between urban and rural areas in Nagpur Metropolitan Area. In January 2020 a stakeholder roundtable meeting on "Building Urban-rural Partnership for Resilient Future: Applying CEE in Nagpur" was held in Nagpur. In the meeting, participants discussed further actions to take on the path to a resilient future through application of the CEE concept. The stakeholder meeting recommended establishment of an urban-rural coordinating entity at governance

level of Nagpur Municipality to apply the CEE concept for integrated policy making that incorporate resource circulation, low-carbon society and living in harmony with nature.



A case in Japan

Movement to create CEE in Kyushu

There is a movement in the Kyushu region to create a CEE to solve common issues in each region, such as population decline and promoting agriculture and tourism. On January 18, 2020, the Kyushu Regional Environment Office of the MOEJ and local financial institutions in the Kyushu Region (Higo Bank, Oita Bank, Miyazaki Bank, Kagoshima Bank) concluded a memorandum of understanding on the CEE concept in central and southern Kyushu. The purpose of this agreement is to contribute to the development of a CEE in central and southern Kyushu through the coordinated sharing of information across the areas where the four banks are located. Under this agreement, actions will be taken for the collaborative development of tourism routes using resources in national parks spanning the four prefectures in central and southern Kyushu, sharing the tools of each organization to disseminate and foster public awareness on the SDGs, organizing joint seminars, and conducting collaborative campaigns for financial products related to ESG financing.

The 2nd Japan-Thailand Environmental Policy Dialogue

The 2nd Policy Dialogue on Environmental Issues between Japan and Thailand was organized on January 13, 2020 in Bangkok, Thailand during the Thailand-Japan Environmental Solutions Week. From Thailand, Asdaporn Krairapanond, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) and other related officials attended.

At the Dialogue, the two ministries discussed and agreed on the future direction for cooperation in the areas ranging from air quality management, and water quality management, to marine plastic litter, waste management, climate change and management of GHG emissions, management of protected areas such as national parks, environmental governance and water resource management.

The 3rd Japan-Myanmar Environmental Policy Dialogue

On February 7, 2020, the 3rd Policy Dialogue on Environmental Issues between Japan and Myanmar was organized in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, attended by Ye Myint Swe, Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Myanmar and Kato Ayuko, Parliamentary Vice-Minister of the Environment, Japan. The meeting was organized based on the Memorandum of Cooperation in the field of Environment signed between the ministries in August 2018.

At the Dialogue, participants discussed

topics including "water pollution and johkasou," "marine plastic debris and waste management," "air pollution," "the Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM)," and "environment impact assessment," and agreed on the future direction of cooperation for each topic.



The 13th Japan-Mongolia Environmental Policy Dialogue

On February 18, 2020, the 13th Policy Dialogue on Environmental Issues between Japan and Mongolia was organized in Tokyo, Japan, attended by Batbayar Tserendorj, Vice Minister of Environment and Tourism, Mongolia and Sato Yukari, State Minister of the Environment, Japan. This policy dialogue was organized based on the Memorandum of Cooperation



between MOEJ and the Ministry of Environment and Tourism of Mongolia on Environmental Cooperation, signed in December 2011 and renewed in 2015 and 2018.

The participants discussed "air pollution including sand and dust storms", "the GOSAT (Greenhouse Gases Observing Satellite) series", "the Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM)", "the Initiative on Fluorocarbon Life Cycle Management", "climate change adaptation", and "conservation and sustainable use of plants." Both countries agreed on the way forward for cooperation on each topic.

The 5th Japan-Singapore Environmental Policy Dialogue

On April 3, 2019, the 5th Policy Dialogue on Environmental Issues between Japan and Singapore was organized in Singapore. The Dialogue was attended by Albert Chua, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources (MEWR) and Takahashi Yasuo, then-Vice Minister for Global Environmental Affairs, MOEJ. The dialogue was organized based on the Memorandum of Cooperation on Environmental Matters between the MOEJ and the MEWR signed in June 2017. Participants shared information and exchanged views on major issues in both countries including "solid waste management," "land remediation," and "climate change." Both countries agreed to continue not only their bilateral cooperation but also collaboration in the ASEAN region and also international frameworks.

The 12th Intergovernmental Regional EST Forum in Asia

MOEJ organized the 12th Intergovernmental Regional Environmentally Sustainable Transport (EST) Forum in Asia in Hanoi, Viet Nam on October 28-31, 2019 with the United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD) and other related organizations. At the Regional EST Forum, high-level dialogues and other related meetings have been organized aiming to realize EST in Asia. Under the theme "Achieving Smart and Resilient City through Low Carbon and Intelligent Transport System," the 12th Forum was attended

by participants comprising high-level government representatives from 22 countries, high-level officials from local government including mayors, international experts and academics in transportation and environment sectors, as well as representatives from various international organizations.

From Japan, Yagi Tetsuya, Parliamentary Vice-Minister of the Environment, Japan and relevant stakeholders participated in the forum. Japan proposed the future direction of EST toward 2030 in consideration of international agendas such as the SDGs and integrative actions for decarbonization, and this was welcomed by the participants.

During the forum, a poster exhibition by 12 organizations/ companies was organized to introduce Japanese technologies contributing to the realization of EST, including environmentally sound automobiles (trucks and buses), and air quality and noise monitoring equipment.





Thailand-Japan Environmental Solutions Week

Thailand-Japan Environmental Solutions Week was jointly organized by MOEJ and MONRE in Bangkok, Thailand from January 14 to 16, 2020.

During the event, the Environmental Policy Dialogue between MOEJ and MONRE (see p.8) was organized to discuss environmental cooperation between the countries. In addition, Open Seminar on Environmental Solution was organized on January 15, 2020, aiming at sharing environmental solutions that contribute to sustainable development in Thailand. The seminars was attended by around 400 participants including Sato Yukari, State Minister of the Environment, Japan and Asdaporn Krairapanond, Deputy Permanent Secretary of MONRE, as well as various stakeholders from national and local governments, the private sector, research institutes and other entities.

An exhibition of environmental solutions by the private sector (26 companies and organizations) was also organized as a part of the Open Seminar, providing an opportunity for business matching between Japanese companies and seminar participants. On January 16, a series of parallel sessions on specific topics such as marine plastic debris and climate change adaptation were organized, where representatives from the public and private sectors held meaningful discussions on their roles and possible cooperation to address the challenges facing both countries.







The 16th ASEAN+3 Environment Ministers Meeting and the first ASEAN-JAPAN Ministerial Dialogue on Environmental Cooperation

The 16th ASEAN+3 (Japan, China and Republic of Korea) Environment Ministers Meeting and the first ASEAN-JAPAN Ministerial Dialogue on Environmental Cooperation were held in Siem Reap, Cambodia on October 9, 2019. Sato Yukari, State Minister of the Environment, Japan, attended the meeting.

At the meetings, State Minister Sato introduced the steady implementation of comprehensive environmental cooperation for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (the SDGs) in ASEAN countries and the establishment of the Regional Knowledge Centre for Marine Plastic Debris, based on the ASEAN-Japan Environmental Cooperation Initiative announced by Prime Minister Abe at the ASEAN-Japan Summit in 2017. She also proposed cooperation on new actions on fluorocarbon management and ETV (environmental technology verification), which was welcomed by the participating countries. State Minister Sato also had a series of meetings with the Ministers/representatives of Cambodia, Viet Nam, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and Myanmar and discussed ways to strengthen collaboration regarding the ASEAN+3 Marine Plastic Debris Cooperative Action initiatives, Fluorocarbons Life-Cycle Management initiative, and cooperation on individual issues in each country.

The 21st Tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting among Japan, Korea and China (TEMM21)

On November 23–24, 2019, the 21st Tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting among Japan, Korea and China (TEMM21) was held in Kitakyushu City, Fukuoka, Japan, bringing together Koizumi Shinjiro, Minister of the Environment, Japan, Cho Myungrae, Minister of Environment of the Republic of Korea and Li Ganjie of the Minister of Ecology and Environment of the People's Republic of China.

The meeting included a review of the

environmental cooperation by the three countries and provided an opportunity to exchange recent developments in environmental policies in each country. The Ministers agreed on three basic principles and eight priority areas for the next Tripartite Joint Action Plan (2020– 2024), i.e. air quality improvement, 3R/ circular economy/zero waste city, marine and water environment management, climate change, biodiversity, chemical management and environmental emergency response, transition to green economy, environmental education, and public awareness and engagement. The meeting concluded in the adoption of the Joint Communiqué.

Bilateral meetings between Japan-China and Japan-Korea were also organized, and the Ministers discussed further promotion of environmental cooperation.





City-to-city collaboration for creating a decarbonized society

The Paris Agreement came into effect in November 2016, and has finally entered the implementation phase in 2020. The Paris Agreement also reports that both state and non-state actors, including local governments and cities, are contributing to the accelerated pace of climate change and notes that cities and local governments are key players in investigating and implementing local climate concrete change measures and projects. In order to create decarbonized societies around the world, it is necessary to accelerate actions to create sustainable decarbonized societies and low-carbon societies as points along the way, especially in Asia where there has been remarkable economic growth. The global movement to support initiatives by municipalities is being strengthened to decarbonize and develop lowcarbon cities, as the stages for actions to support socio-economic development. In 2020, the city-to-city collaboration project for a creating decarbonized society has moved into its eighth year of implementation with 32 cities and regions in 10 countries in Asia and 14 local governments in Japan participating in the program to date. Specifically, the program provides support for the establishment of systems that contribute to decarbonization and low-carbon development in partner cities overseas, as well as the conduct of feasibility studies on introducing technologies in the implementation stages of these systems, which is leading to the adoption of model projects under the Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM).



Seminar on city-to-city collaboration for the purpose of sharing good examples of proposed projects and building networks)

Information on City-to-city Collaboration Program and Feasibility Study on JCM

Ministry of the Environment's Web Portal for Low Carbon Development in Asia

http://www.env.go.jp/earth/coop/lowcarbon-asia/english/

- Trends in international negotiations and related systems
- Governmental agencies in Asian countries
- Low-carbon/environmental policies in Asian countries
 Governmental support systems for overseas business development



Clean Asia Initiative Newsletter vol.19, March 2020

Published by Ministry of the Environment, Japan/Produced and Edited by the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies



Main

information

[Edited/Published] Institute for Global Environmental Strategies

2108-11 Kamiyamaguchi, Hayama, Kanagawa, 240-0115, Japan Tel: +81-(0)46-855-3700 E-mail: cai@iges.or.jp http://www.env.go.jp/earth/coop/coop/english/cai/about.html



International Cooperation and Sustainable Infrastructure Office, International Strategy Division, Global Environment Bureau, Ministry of the Environment, Japan

1-2-2 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, 100-8975, Japan Tel: +81-(0)3-3581-3351 Fax: +81-(0)3-3581-3423 http://www.env.go.jp/earth/coop/coop/english/