Key findings of the 22nd Asia-Pacific Seminar on Climate Change

- Date and Place: June 27-28, 2013, Hanoi (Vietnam)
- Organizer: Ministry of the Environment, Japan (MOEJ)
- Co-organizers:
  - ✓ Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education, Australia
  - ✓ Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Vietnam
- Secretariat: Overseas Environmental Cooperation Center, Japan (OECC)

[Background]

The Asia-Pacific Seminar on Climate Change (hereinafter referred to as "AP Seminar") serves as a regional vehicle for countries to promote confidence building via the provision of opportunities to exchange their views and experiences regarding climate change issues in a practical manner. The 22nd AP Seminar was co-organized by the Ministry of the Environment, Japan, the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, Australia, and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Vietnam.

The 22nd AP Seminar adopted *"Measurable, Reportable and Verifiable (MRV)"* (hereinafter referred to as "MRV") for mitigation and *"Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)"* (hereinafter referred to as "M&E") for adaptation in the Asia-Pacific region as topics of discussion.

With MRV for mitigation developing nations shared the status of their implementation and lessons learned from Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) (hereinafter referred to as "NAMAs"), along with the status of the preparation of Biennial Update Reports (BURs) from each individual state, and which will be submitted to the UNFCCC secretariat in 2014. The context of the NAMAs assessments included institutional arrangements among the relevant ministries also being necessary.

Similarly, the development of an M&E adaption framework has gradually been taking place, especially in some of the more developed nations, for example Germany and the UK. Several bilateral development agencies have also proposed piloted M&E frameworks that will utilize the knowledge and experience of development and vulnerability indicators. These frameworks remain diverse in terms of their design, and there are currently no equivalent schemes for MRV mitigation. However, it is essential that a variety of lessons be learnt from such piloted frameworks.

As a forum for climate change policy makers and practitioners the 22nd AP Seminar proved to be a useful opportunity for countries within the region to exchange and discuss the experiences and lessons learned from their ongoing and future MRV mitigation and M&E adaptation efforts and thereby promoting greater regional cooperation.

[Measurement, Report, and Verification (MRV) of Mitigation Actions in Developing Nations]

1. Understanding NAMAs and MRV

NAMAs include some rather important elements, such as any deviation from the BAU emission scenarios, and which can be identified in a layered structure at differing levels (national, sectors, programs, and projects) and that are linked to development planning. In addition, NAMAs need to be supported by solid and credible MRV, whose modalities have to be designed according to emission reduction goals at the different levels. With respect to international reports being made, when BURs are submitted within the same year as National Communications (NC) they can be submitted as part of National Communications (a BUR submitted within the same year as a NC is typically a separate report but merely a summary of the key findings that are fully outlined in the NC concerned). In case of the other years (for example when a BUR is due between the NC reporting period it gets reported in full) BURs are separate reports that include updated records of the required data and information.

2. Selection of mitigation actions

Countries have considered utilizing different criteria to use in identifying, prioritizing, and selecting their potential NAMAs. And that is because the importance of each individual criterion can vary according to the circumstances of the country concerned. However, alignment of the respective NAMAs with developmental goals is generally regarded as being fundamental (receiving guidance from the COP). In addition, the cost implications of NAMAs are critical, and as such some countries have conducted cost-benefit analysis of NAMA options. Furthermore, developing nations are seeking opportunities for technology transfer to take place when designing and implementing their NAMAs.[1]

3. Level of accuracy of information and data

General recognition has taken place that the availability of information and data on GHGs as well as their levels of accuracy can be a major challenge to many developing nations. In addition, when the relevant information and data are available then discrepancies can often exist between the data collection and data reporting systems. In this respect some of the experience of the different countries has revealed that it can be useful to utilize prior agreed upon methods of measurement which take into account a fair balance of both accuracy and feasibility. A further increase in the capacity of GHG inventory developments may also prove useful in NAMA data collection and reports.

4. Finance for NAMAs and BURs

The GEF has funded both NCs and BURs. With NAMAs positive indication of a GEF Trust Fund being available for use in the implementation of NAMAs has also taken

[1] 2/CP.17 Annex III paragraph 2

place[2]. However, some countries still face a number of barriers that include the capability to directly access finance, information, and understanding regarding the NAMA process, along with coordination between the key stakeholders, including line ministries and donors. It is also critical to strengthen enabling environments in order to increase the scale of funding from the private sector. Some countries have expressed their expectation of a Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM) being initiated by the Government of Japan as an innovative means of mobilizing finance for use in implementing NAMAs.

5. Information sharing and communication platform

Information sharing tools such as the NAMA registry and NAMA guidebooks produced by several institutions are very useful. In addition to the aforementioned tools other different types of communication platforms, for example the Support Programme to Respond to Climate Change (SP-RCC) of Vietnam and the AP Seminar are also essential in the sharing of knowledge and lessons learned from the concrete experiences of each country.

[Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of Adaptation]

1. Adaptation and M&E

M&E of adaptation is an emerging body of practice, with several ongoing efforts being made by different countries, donors, and international organizations and utilizing differing approaches. It would be useful to take stock of any such practices in thereby sharing the lessons learned from and best practices for enhancing M&E of adaptation in both developed and developing nations.

2. Synergies and differences with respect to adaptation, developmental actions, and M&E

A variety of working definitions with respect to adaptation are being used by the different organizations, but the majority of countries recognize that adaptation actions should be integrated into continued efforts to ensure sustainable development. Some aspects of the M&E of adaptation may be distinctive to traditional M&E of developmental actions (for example non-linearity and uncertainty), but experience gained and lessons learned from developmental practice should provide useful guidance.

3. M&E Indicators

Adaptation is planned for using the specific contexts of the different countries and regions and thus a constant challenge is identifying universal indicators to use in tracking the progress or evaluating the effectiveness of interventions. In many countries, and donors' operations, indicators get developed within their own context and both

[2] The GEF has mobilized resources to increase the capacity of non-Annex I parties with respect to UNFCCC implementation. http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/document/GEF%20Report%20to%20COP18.pdf

quantitatively and qualitatively. Useful indicators require the available data that is the most appropriate to use when monitoring change and avoid being a significant burden with respect to reports. Simplifying and reducing the number of indicators could therefore be a useful approach to use in focusing more on key adaptation goals. Qualitative information is useful in identifying the results of adaptation actions and changes with respect to vulnerabilities. In-depth studies, particularly at the evaluation stage, are a useful learning tool and can complement methodologies that utilize indicators. The links between indicators, desired outcomes, and wider based adaptation goals need to be very clear at the outset as part of the impact chain/logical framework.

4. Challenges and importance of linking M&E at the project level to the national/programmatic level

A fairly good foundation of experience with the M&E of adaptation exists at the project level but less experience with M&E at the national and systemic levels. Countries, as well as donors, are seeking to shift from project-based M&E to national or programmatic level M&E via the use of various approaches. Agreed upon high-level adaptation goals and strategic frameworks are therefore needed that can serve as guidance or to coordinate the M&E of adaptation actions at the various different levels. In addition, roles and responsibilities with respect to reports need to be identified and planned for at appropriate intervals as part of any effective M&E system. A need also exists for further study of the efficacy of the various approaches used to date to aggregate adaptation monitoring and results at the strategic level.

5. Stakeholder engagement

Engaging the key relevant stakeholders in the process of conducting M&E for adaptation, including the setting of indicators and designing frameworks for M&E, is of critical importance. Bottom-up participatory approaches can be used to complement top-down planning with respect to short, medium, and long-term timelines.

6. M&E resources and capacity

Increasing M&E resources and capacity is critical in enhanced and sustainable adaptation. At the same time, however, ensuring the approaches used are both cost-effective and streamlined is important. The constraints that exist with respect to the availability of data and with the collection of information, while also ensuring the individual national circumstances are taken into account, make the design and operation of feasible M&E using nationally available data sets and in line with their relevant national and local plans extremely critical. It is important that M&E of adaptation should also increase their local capacity to monitor and adapt to changing circumstances and thereby ensuring sustainable M&E and adaptive learning.