

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH NETWORK FOR LOW CARBON SOCIETIES (LCS-RNET)

Background

At their 2008 meeting in Kobe, G8 Environment Ministers recognised the need for countries to make the transition to low-carbon societies. This would contribute to the goal, discussed at the 2007 G8 Heiligendamm Summit, of halving global emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050. To make the transition, each country needs a clear vision of what a low-carbon society would look like and how the transition might be achieved. In Kobe, the G8 Environment Ministers strongly supported the establishment of an *International Research Network for Low Carbon Societies (LCS-RNet)* to help with developing these visions and pathways.

What are the objectives of LCS-RNet?

The objectives of the Network are:

- to promote information exchange and research cooperation relating to low-carbon societies;
- to promote understanding of low carbon societies through dialogue between researchers and various stakeholders including policy-makers, business and citizens;
- to share national and sub-national visions of low-carbon societies; and
- to contribute to international policy-making processes on climate change, including the G8, by communicating research outcomes and recommendations.

What is the focus of its activities?

Among the topics covered by LCS-RNet are: energy technologies and resources; finance, investment and the economics of a low carbon society; low carbon cities and infrastructure; mobility in a low carbon society; lifestyle and behaviour; the contribution of low carbon societies to sustainable development; low carbon society policies; low carbon society modelling; and the low carbon society research environment. A unique feature of LCS-RNet is that it addresses the social and human dimensions of the low carbon society as well as technology and economics.

How does it operate?

LCS-RNet has been established under the auspices of G8 governments but is operated by a group of leading research institutions. A Steering Group composed of representatives from participating research institutions guides the development of the network and plans its activities. Government representatives from the countries holding the current and succeeding G8 Presidencies participate in the Steering Group as observers. The Institute of Global Environmental Studies (IGES) based in Hayama Japan hosts the LCS-RNet Secretariat.

LCS-RNet strives to be policy relevant without being policy prescriptive and is independent of any government. Membership of the network does not imply any constraint on the activities of participating research organisations.

The key event in the LCS-RNet calendar is a two-day annual Researchers' Meeting to which all member organisations are invited. Other proposed activities include: a one week summer school for intensive study; promotion and support for stakeholder meetings in different national settings; and the development of tools and measures to facilitate stakeholder dialogue.

What are the outputs?

A key goal is to generate accessible outputs that will bridge the gap between the research community and policy-makers. LCS-RNet will communicate its activities and findings to G8 Environment Ministers Meeting, Major Economies Meeting on Energy Security and Climate Change, the UNFCCC and other international policy processes.

In addition to reports of the annual researchers meeting, the network will produce a newsletter and annual report.

Who is engaged with LCS-RNet?

Research institutions conducting activities that will help to form a vision of and make the transition to a low carbon society are eligible to participate in LCS-RNet.

The following research institutions participated in the first Researchers Meeting in Trieste in April 2009:

Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI), France
Environment and Energy Management Agency (ADEME), France
Wuppertal Institute for Climate Environment Energy (WI), Germany
Euro Mediterranean Centre for Climate Change (CMCC), Italy
National Agency for New Technologies, Energy, and the Environment (ENEA), Italy
Institute for Global Environmental Studies (IGES), Japan
National Institute for Environmental Studies (NIES), Japan
UK Energy Research Centre, UK, and
National Institute of Environmental Research (NIER), Korea, Republic of

LCS-RNet takes an inclusive approach to its membership and qualifying institutions from countries within and beyond the G8 are welcome to participate. The participation of Institutions from developing countries is particularly encouraged.

Where to find more information

For more information about LCS-RNet visit the website <http://lcs-rnet.org>.