

P5.2-2 Promotion of Dialogue for Policy Making: Case of the Long-Term Significant Reduction in GHG Emissions

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Purpose

This government-funded social empirical research was launched in fiscal 2008 and will continue to be conducted throughout fiscal 2011. Under the theme of achieving significant long-term GHG emissions reductions, the project aims to develop and propose a forum and function in which stakeholders who are society members strongly linked with the theme can engage in deep contemplation and intense dialogue with one another, while consulting scientists and experts so that the conclusions derived can ultimately be communicated to the public. In order to socially prove the social validity of such a forum and function, a series of stakeholder meetings, or called the 'Forum for the Creating of a Low-Carbon Society,' has been conducted in fiscal years 2009 and 2010. With the participation and cooperation of scientists and experts with deep insight of Japan's policy-making process, as well as leading stakeholders from various sectors, namely, the industrial, public, NPO and civic sectors, the Forum exceeds the boundaries of social experiment, engaging stakeholders in intense serious debate that lead to highly realistic conclusions. We will endeavour to apply the findings of this research to society after undergoing third-party assessment.

Outline of the 'Forum for Creating a Low-Carbon Society'

The main points of the stakeholder meeting, 'Forum for Creating a Low-Carbon Society' are provided below:

1. The series of forums are held during a period of two years, comprising three phases:

Phase 1: Stakeholders individually contemplated on issues that should be seriously debated from this early stage based on their social position and interests, in order to achieve significant GHG reductions in the long-term. Each stakeholder then submitted a proposal of issues to be debated. At the beginning of the phase, stakeholders were

presented a long-term scenario for the creation of a low-carbon society in 2050 to set the stage and took time for questions to experts.

Phase 2: Stakeholders shared their respective proposals among themselves and spontaneously determined which themes should be addressed in this forum, through continued discussion

Phase 3: Stakeholders will enhance the dialogue on the selected themes with an aim to identify the opinion structure among themselves.

2. Stakeholders are required to state opinions supported by the interests and concerns of the organisation that he/she represents.
3. Stakeholders have the initiative in taking discussions forward. The debate themes, extracted points of controversy, and conference planning are spontaneously decided by the stakeholders. Secretariat is committed to facilitating the forums.
4. The target of forums shall be 'to identify opinion structure' on the debate themes among stakeholders, which refers to discovering the reasons or points of controversy that cannot be overcome despite dedicated efforts to reach a consensus or to find a point of agreement on the debated theme, while questions, contemplation and dialogues between scientists/experts and stakeholders, and among stakeholders.
5. Social communication of forum conclusions
6. The forums will be held with awareness towards the possibility of communicating the conclusions to society, thus arousing wide public discussion or providing useful reference for public decision-making.

Interim report on research and development project

The Forum completed Phases 1 and 2 in fiscal 2009. During Phase 1, stakeholders proposed a total of over

sixty themes, an overview of which is exhibited in Figure 1. In Phase 2, stakeholders discussed which themes should be debated among themselves and finally decided on the following two themes by vote (Refer to Figure 1):

Theme 1: Energy supply: How much more should renewable energy contribute to the energy mix in 2050?

Theme 2: Visions of lifestyle in a low-carbon society

At present, stakeholders are considering methodologies that will enable intense debate among stakeholders on the two themes. Four meetings are scheduled to be held for each theme during the period between September 2010 and March 2011.

Future Issues

This social empirical research aims to propose a forum and function for identifying the opinion structure among stakeholders regarding substantial GHG reductions in the long-term.

The research project was envisaged in 2007, only shortly after which the IPCC’s Fourth Assessment Report was announced. The Bali Roadmap was adopted at the COP13 meeting at the end of that same year. The political developments in the climate change arena both domestically and internationally have been inconceivably rapid during the two and a half years succeeding. Significant long-term GHG emissions reductions have become a common acknowledgment in international politics but have also gained domestic recognition in both legal and political dimensions. The research and development project takes steady approaches in developing mid- and long-term methods, but has also come to reveal - realistic aspects, providing a solution for actual social needs and politics.

Figure 1:

