

Test Run Peer Review
(Climate Policy Project)

17th-19th February, 2004

To improve the quality of IGES research and to enhance the organisation's international recognition, the IGES Board Members proposed that IGES institutionalise a system by which its research is evaluated by external experts; to take the form of peer reviews. Before the full-fledged introduction of this system in the 3rd Phase, a Test Run Peer Review was conducted on 17th-19th February 2004, to ascertain the best way to organise such reviews and to determine the obstacles to introducing the system throughout the organisation.

At the Test Run Peer Review conducted by a Review Panel of three members (2 RAC members and 1 expert), the Climate Policy Project was reviewed from both administrative and academic points of view. The various issues raised by the panel members are noted below.

IGES will carry out peer reviews on all of its projects during the 3rd phase, taking full consideration of the comments and suggestions made during the Test Run.

Outline of the Test Run Peer Review

Date 17-19 February, 2004

Venue Conference Room 2, IGES Headquarters

Participants *Reviewers:*

Mr. Kotaro Kimura

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Dr. Jochen Luhmann

Deputy Director, Climate Policy Division, Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy, Germany

Dr. Leena Srivastava

Executive Director, The Energy and Resources Institute, India

Climate Policy Project:

Dr. Shuzo Nishioka, Project Leader, and Executive Director, National Institute for Environmental Studies

Dr. Tae Yong Jung, Senior Research Fellow

Dr. Ancha Srinivasan, Research Fellow/Project Manager

Dr. Yasushi Ninomiya, Research Associate

Mr. Yosuke Fukushima, Research Associate

Mr. Kentaro Tamura, Research Associate

Mr. Kunihiko Shimada, Research Associate

Dr. Naoki Matsuo, Visiting Researcher and Former Senior Research Fellow

IGES Secretariat:

Prof. Akio Morishima, Chair of the Board of Directors of IGES

Mr. Hiroyasu Tokuda, Secretary-General

Mr. Yuichi Mori, Deputy Secretary-General

Comments and Suggestions from the Review Panel

1. Comments about IGES

General

- IGES should be commended for such a large number of areas of involvement in such a short period of time, considering the challenges it has faced as a new institution.
- The 'IGES vision' should be clearly defined and articulated. Each and every IGES employee – current, future and visiting – should work towards realising this vision.
- It is extremely important that IGES consolidates what has been learnt from past and current activities and positions itself as a “service-provider” to the countries of the region. Currently, IGES takes rather a passive attitude to changes in situation, and instead should work towards responding to research needs in an integrative manner.
- IGES must sharpen its insight, looking to anticipate future trends. The Institute should ‘take the lead’.
- To present credible policy proposals, the Institute must properly assess the needs of the stakeholders. For this purpose, it is important to have an active and constant exchange of opinions with policy-makers, while following progress in international negotiations and discussions closely. Although IGES has such a strong connection with the Ministry of Environment, the institute must also extend its associations with other government ministries and agencies.
- IGES should formulate a clear mission statement that clarifies the ways in which IGES will influence or contribute to political processes; at which levels, and by which means. This must be based on professional knowledge of political processes and the ways in which they can be systematically influenced.
- While IGES has set ‘providing policy impacts through strategic research’ as one of its major objectives, a comprehensible and concrete structure to measure such impacts has not yet been established.
- To ensure that IGES policy proposals are truly influential and to gain the trust of stakeholders, it is essential to realise the ‘independence of research’ as stipulated in the Chapter. Unfortunately, despite sincere efforts to secure other funding, IGES is still largely dependent on the Ministry of Environment and various related local governments when it comes to finances and human resources.
- IGES must continue its efforts to increase its funding and to raise public money (from sources other than the Ministry of Environment, related local governments and foreign governments), while expanding its cooperative relationship with the private sector.
- IGES must create a demand for the output of the institute.
- Advisory panels could be used to guide project leaders.

Management

- Given the existing procedure of business reporting that is limited to financial reporting, the IGES management only allocates funds/distributes resources to the Projects. An exhaustive list of defined products of IGES activities is the prerequisite to overcoming this inefficiency.
- IGES should establish a consolidated system of allocating financial resources to activities/projects.
- There should be internal competition for IGES resources, and detailed budget negotiations.
- If an IGES entity (Project) is to apply for outside funding, a procedure should exist that ensures that ‘co-projects’ are precisely defined in terms of resources, timetables and outcomes. IGES should determine the extent to which a co-project can be ‘subsidised’ by IGES core resources and the discernable benefit in light of the IGES goals and vision. It is particularly difficult to grasp exactly where the relative responsibilities lie in joint research with NIES.

Research

- Mobility is a major constraint, but this a challenge to all research institutions.
- Attracting a larger number of experts is a challenge for a new institution that is somewhat remotely located. IGES must increase the number of collaborative projects with other institutions. IGES should consider virtual staffing, exchange programmes and internships.
- It is important for IGES to document learnings from its various projects/activities in a properly classified manner. An institutionalised knowledge-management system should be established to enable new IGES researchers to learn about the institution and projects.
- It may be appropriate to limit the areas of research for a time, in order to increase the quality of research in a few specific areas and consolidate the status of IGES as a leading research institute on a global scale.
- Researchers should not be allowed to excessively pursue fame in academic circles: elevation of name-value should be considered the by-product of excellent research.
- IGES researchers should 'market' IGES research.
- It is very important to keep mailing lists current.
- Mechanisms should be in place to obtain feedback on utility/demand for IGES publications.
- There should be periodic technical review of the quality of publications.

2. Specific Comments on the Climate Policy Project

Management

- The total amount of time and frequency that the Project Leader has spent with project members seems insufficient for high quality guidance and evaluation purposes. The absence of a full-time project leader is a problem. Installing a Project Manager may ease the situation, but that is rather dependent on the personality and endurance of that person. Therefore, the Institute must aim to recruit a full-time Project Leader in the 3rd phase.
- The Project Leader should allocate the Project's limited human resources optimally, paying careful attention to the priority of each theme within CP.
- There does not seem to be a rigorous quality control system in place.
- CP should develop a template check list for each project/activity: this should include a needs assessment, review process (inception, intermediate periods, a draft final report), outcome indicators, outreach/publications (draft plans at inception), and follow-up activities/consolidation.
- CP should develop an activity tracking system.

Research

- CP has engaged in an astonishingly high number of 'themes' and has produced an impressive number of publications.
- It is important to address environmental issues from a broader perspective, including economic and social viewpoints.
- CP should aim to attract visiting researchers and collaborate with other institutes to secure greater variety of expertise among its researchers.
- The Project should select one or two research themes and cultivate the world's top level experts in these fields. This would enhance the Institute's presence in the climate change research field.
- CP must choose the appropriate forum to present its research results.
- The presentation of an option at the appropriate forum should be considered a political impact in itself, given that policy making can be defined as the choice between different options.

- There is some suspicion that there is no sound basis of strategic political thought behind CP decisions, in consideration of the adoption and abandonment of themes at certain points.
- A further indication of this lack of a concrete strategic view in the portfolio is the limited formulation of linkages between the different activities.
- The portfolio gives the impression that decisions are increasingly being taken with the aim to address the global level, given that IGES aims to become a 'global player'. CP submitted a paper detailing the role of the Netherlands (Document 20) in the Pre-Kyoto-process. This, along with many other historical examples, proves that a sound domestic and regional basis is a prerequisite to any sustained impact at higher levels. Therefore, CP should now restrain from active involvement at the global level and concentrate on Japanese policy and policy of North-East Asia or the East Pacific area. Once this portfolio is well developed, there will be demand for IGES participation at the global level. In other words, to be true to the 'global' in IGES, CP should build up to macro solutions.
- The 'policy dimension' of each activity should be consciously flagged.
- CP should also focus on methodological challenges
- CP should identify position 'divergences' and propose 'convergent' positions.
- There are currently no formal mechanisms or indicators in place to measure impact assessment. CP should establish impact measures for each activity, in terms of stakeholders (policy/implementation) and time-frames (strategic). Indicators could include the quality and quantity of audience, stakeholder mix, geographic spread, OTS/OTH.
- CP should extend its links with other IGES themes e.g. Local knowledge in Bangladesh is clearly related to the Environmental Education Programme.
- CP should take a proactive approach, both in research and in policy proposal, rather than waiting for others to make a move or for negotiations to be started. This would enhance its impact/influence on policies and negotiations.

Sub-Themes

Domestic Policies

- This theme holds poor persuasion power as a policy proposal. For example, it contains no quantitative analysis. Moreover, the portfolio fails to present the design details of environmental taxes.

Post Kyoto Issues

- To enable CP to play an active role in this field, and in consideration of both the Japanese perspective and the situation in foreign countries, it was necessary to start this research a year earlier.
- More attention should be given to fact finding studies.
- The CP definition of 'climate policy' in its post-Kyoto-approach is rather too narrow. This narrow definition appears to be part of a high-risk 'one card' or 'all or nothing' approach. There has not, up to this point, been a regime implemented by such a 'grand design'. Therefore, CP should consider the whole range of possible climate policy options and should determine which, in particular, could be treated successfully by Japan in collaboration with its neighbouring countries. Science must be used to provide options in the case of the failure of top level negotiations.
- For developing countries, adaptation issues are considered an essential requirement to be included in any post-Kyoto-regime. Since there is no necessity to provide and coordinate adaptation measures at the global level, the issue should be dealt with at the regional level.
- The Asian Brown Cloud issue is, according to the definitions of the Kyoto regime, not a greenhouse subject; it is, nevertheless, exerting a negative influence across various continents via the atmospheric system, and

therefore must be tackled multilaterally.

Vulnerability

- CP should develop well-organised domestic models and strategies on vulnerability issues, which could then be transferred to developing countries.

Wording

- There is a misleading use of the word 'project'. Within the Climate Policy Project (CPP), there are activities grouped together that could legitimately be called projects, but currently, these are special activities under the umbrella of the CP 'Project'.
- There should be a clear differentiation between outcomes and outputs. The presentation did make some distinction but further clarity is necessary.

3. Comments on the Peer Review Process

- To make the process of external review effective, it is essential that reviewers receive clearly comprehensible materials/documents/publications/explanations from the party under review.
- These documents should be screened internally before their dispatch.
- It is commendable that IGES was honest and transparent in sending lower grade documents. But, it was rather a burden for reviewers to read them all. In the future, it would be more appropriate to send a limited number of the more high quality documents, accompanied by a full list of materials, thereby enabling reviewers to request any material they wish to review in detail.
- These documents should include statements/feedback from clients, including the relevant ministries, who should give an evaluation of the quality (or 'intellectual rigor'), as well as the usefulness, of the contributions made by the Project's work.
- The involvement of review panels should be restricted to issues specific to the subjects of the Project to be assessed.