

Summary:

Informal dialogue on Future of Low Carbon Cities Platform (LCCP)

7 October 2024

Meeting Overview

Prior to the 4th International Forum on Low Carbon Cities, the Secretariat invited long-standing partners from the three previous forums (see list below) and organized an informal dialogue of Low Carbon Cities Forum partners focused on collaborative approaches to advance low-carbon city development in Northeast Asia. Participants shared updates on their current projects, discussed methods to revitalize the Northeast Asia Low Carbon City Platform (NEA-LCCP), and explored strategies for leveraging peer review, knowledge exchange, and regional collaboration. The meeting noted the need for ongoing engagement and practical tools to facilitate a more impactful platform.

Main conclusions

Revitalizing the NEA-LCCP Platform

The platform, initially launched in 2014, has seen limited activity in recent years. Attendees discussed the importance of re-engaging cities within Northeast Asia and broadening participation to include emerging environmental initiatives. There was also interest in bringing forum events to locations beyond the Republic of Korea, such as China or Mongolia, to promote broader regional involvement.

Peer Review and Comparative Studies

Participants agreed on the value of extending peer reviews to additional cities, with a goal to foster mutual learning and encourage cities to share best practices in sustainable urban development. Comparative studies at the national level were also proposed to draw insights from existing policies in China, Japan, and Korea, and explore how these might be adapted or scaled to other local contexts.

Focused Knowledge Sharing and Technical Sessions

Attendees recommended narrowing down forum topics for deeper exploration, with suggestions including smart city development, hydrogen technologies, and waste management. These technical sessions would build on past forum discussions and provide cities with practical steps and specific case studies to address low-carbon challenges effectively.

Interactive Platform for Ongoing Engagement

Recognizing that yearly forums alone may not be sufficient for continuous progress, the group discussed the potential of an interactive, virtual platform. This would allow participants to share publications, event calendars, and project updates throughout the year. Such a platform could be useful in maintaining momentum, connecting stakeholders, and providing a space for real-time problem-solving.

Community and Policy Integration

A central theme was the need to bridge policy work with on-the-ground community engagement. Participants emphasized that effective climate action requires understanding community perspectives, especially in areas like disaster resilience and energy transition. There were suggestions for ESCAP to provide templates or guidelines to help cities translate policy goals into community-led initiatives, fostering a two-way learning process between city and national levels.

Next Steps

- There was broad support for establishing a virtual engagement platform to enable ongoing collaboration and support peer learning across cities.
- Future forums may feature targeted technical themes to address specific needs and trends within the region's low-carbon initiatives, making sessions more relevant and focused.

List of attendees

No.	Organization	Department/Position	Name
1	Institute for Global Decarbonization Progress (iGDP)	Project Lead for Energy Transition / Analyst	Xindi Li
2	Incheon Institute	Research Fellow	Minkyung Kang
3		Research Fellow	Ha Eun Kim
4	CityNet	Deputy Secretary General	Aisa Tobing
5		Deputy Director of Programmes	Jaime Paulo Mora
6	City Net-Plus Arts Center for Creative Partnerships	Executive Director	Kendra Hirata
7	Climate Change Center / Local Government Association for Climate & Energy Transition	Director General	Jiwon Choi
8		Research Fellow	Seokjin Hwang
9	United Nations ESCAP East and North-East Asia (ENEA) Office / NEASPEC Secretariat	Deputy Head / Senior Economic Affairs Officer	Riccardo Mesiano
10		Associate Environmental Affairs Officer	Kazuhiko Seriu
11		Research Assistant	Mi-Jin Lee

Ref: Discussion paper (circulated prior to the informal dialogue)

Discussion Paper for 4th International Forum on Low Carbon Cities

7 October 2024

Background and History of the NEA-LCCP

The North-East Asia Low Carbon City Platform (NEA-LCCP) was launched in 2014 by the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC) endorsed by SOM-19. The region, which accounts for over one-third of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, has seen rapid urban growth, with the urban population expected to exceed 70% in the coming decade. Given the urgent need to mitigate GHG emissions, NEA-LCCP was established to promote green and low-carbon city (LCC) development by consolidating knowledge and experiences on LCC policies and fostering cooperation among various stakeholders, including governments, research institutes, and international organizations.

Prior to the launching of the LCCP, mapping of existing networks and initiatives was conducted as part of the initial concept paper: [Microsoft Word - LCCP_paper_8Dec2015 \(neaspec.org\)](#)

In addition to the initial concept paper above, other initiatives may be considered such as the Global Covenant of Mayors, Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) and other established reporting platforms for cities on GHG reductions and low carbon development.

Key Milestones and Activities

1. **Launch and Early Development (2014):** NEA-LCCP's primary goals were to collect and share existing and new information on LCC approaches and policies, and to synergize efforts among research institutions, NGOs, international organizations, and municipal authorities.
2. **Approval of Activity Components (2017):** During SOM-21 in 2017, the platform formalized two key activity components:
 - **Peer Review at the Municipal Level:** This component was designed to help selected cities improve their low-carbon city plans and implementation through peer review processes.
 - **Comparative Study at the National Level:** This involved reviewing government policies on low-carbon city development across China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea (ROK) to identify and compare sector-specific and city-specific good practices that could be applied in other cities in the region.
3. **Pilot Peer Review Studies (2018-2019):**
NEA-LCCP organized pilot peer review workshops in:
 - **Wuhan, China (2018):** Focused on assessing local low-carbon development strategies.
 - **Guangzhou, China (2019):** Continued the review process to strengthen local policies.
 - **Gwangju, Republic of Korea (2019):** Provided a platform to review the city's progress in advancing low-carbon initiatives.

These peer reviews allowed cities to receive constructive feedback and learn from one another's experiences in the low-carbon transition.

4. Comparative Study of National Policies (2019):

A comprehensive study was conducted on the low-carbon city policies of China, Japan, and the ROK. In collaboration with institutions like the Innovative Green Development Program (iGDP), the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), and the Korea Environment Institute (KEI), the study analyzed policy frameworks and practices to identify good practices, challenges, and recommendations for advancing LCC development.

5. Knowledge Sharing and International Forums:

NEA-LCCP aims to promote knowledge sharing and peer-learning. **The 1st International Forum on Low Carbon Cities** was held virtually in November 2021, organized in collaboration with partners such as Incheon Metropolitan City and ICLEI East Asia Secretariat, the forum brought together cities, academia, and research institutes to share best practices in LCC development. The Forum has continued to the 4th now held in Japan.

6. Capacity Building via Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI):

NEA-LCCP recognized that science, technology, and innovation (STI) are crucial for advancing climate change mitigation and building low-carbon, resilient cities. The platform has organized training workshops, such as the **2021 STI Training Workshop for Mongolia**, in partnership with local and international stakeholders, to equip cities with the knowledge and tools needed to transition to low-carbon pathways.

Current Status and Inactivity

Despite its past achievements, the NEA-LCCP has been relatively inactive in recent years, missing opportunities to build on its successes and address the challenges it faced. Revitalizing the platform is essential to keep pace with the increasing urgency of climate action in the region. As the Low Carbon City (LCC) Forum becomes more regularized—with three Forums held in the Republic of Korea and most recent one in Japan—**it's important for the LCCP to align more closely with the Forum's objectives and activities, enhancing its relevance and impact.**

Discussion points under each activity

1. Peer Review and Municipal Improvement:

- How can the peer review process be expanded to involve cities in the region?
- What is the uptake of peer reviews to enhance their LCC plans? How can such peer reviews contribute to capacity planning towards LCC?

2. Comparative Analysis at National Level:

- How can the platform build on the existing comparative studies of LCC policies in China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea?
- What about replicability of such analysis?
- Should we provide more guidelines, templates and resources that can be useful for capacity planning and/or Regionally and Locally Determined Contribution (RLDC)?

3. Knowledge Sharing and Peer-Learning:

- How can we leverage the International Forum on Low Carbon Cities for knowledge sharing and peer learning? (e.g. APUF-9/NDC-Urban initiatives)
- Should NEA-LCCP create more interactive virtual platforms for cities, academia, and research institutes to exchange ideas? Would an online forum/platform be the appropriate space to host the North-East Asia Low Carbon City Platform? Shall this build on existing platforms, or shall a new online space be created?
- Ref:
 - Peer-to-Peer Climate Networks: Digital platforms that connect cities to share best practices, case studies, and lessons learned on climate action.
 - Partnership Marketplaces: Matchmaking platforms where cities can connect with private sector partners, NGOs, and international organizations to implement climate projects.

4. Capacity Building with Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI):

- How can NEA-LCCP continue to leverage science, technology, and innovation to support low-carbon city transitions? Through LCC Forum? Virtual Platform? Or IPCC Special Report on Cities and Climate Change to be released in 2027?