Regional Committee for Future Earth in Asia
Terms of Reference

Background/Rationale

The Regional Center for Future Earth in Asia was set up in 2014 at the Research Institute for Humanity and Nature in Kyoto, Japan. Soon after, the Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) was convened with an inaugural meeting held in November 2015. The RAC was established as a temporary structure, at a time when Future Earth did not yet have concrete guidelines for the details of its regional organizational structure. The functions and responsibilities of the Committee were expected to develop over time as the initial activities mature and priority areas of research and roadmaps to achieve them were considered/identified. Over the last three years of discussion meetings and engagements, the Regional Advisory Committee was expanded and its functions and potential role were outlined. During the 5th Meeting of the Advisory Committee of Future Earth Asia held in July 2019 at RIHN, Kyoto, the establishment of a Regional Committee, with responsibility for overall policy and direction in the development of Future Earth in Asia was approved. To prepare for the transition, the term of office of the existing Regional Advisory Committee will end by December 31, 2019.

The Regional Committee (RC) will strengthen the regional structure and functions of Future Earth in Asia through the framing of strategic goals with prioritized outcomes by engaging at every level, national sub-regional, regional and global to gather inputs and galvanize project formulation and delivery, foster more efficient networking, co-learning, exchange of ideas and results.

The RC in conjunction with the Regional Centre in Asia and the National Committees and other adhering bodies holds oversight responsibility for facilitating regional interactions, fostering capacity building in the region, initiating processes of co-design and establishing regional Future Earth structures and/or activities appropriate to circumstances in Asia.
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1. Definitions

Regional Centre for Future Earth in Asia is a part of Future Earth Global Secretariat and is the entity facilitating regional-level activities in the region. The Regional Centre is currently hosted by the Research Institute for Humanity & Nature which provides funding and manpower for the secretariat.

Future Earth in Asia refers to the network and its activities related to Future Earth within the Asian region.

The Regional Committee (RC) is the body providing overall guidance, strategic direction and vision to the Regional Centre for Future Earth in Asia. Its role is to effectively advocate for Future Earth in the region and regional interests in the global Future Earth platform.

2. Core functions of the Regional Committee

The Future Earth Regional Committee for Asia has the following functions:
- Provide strategic direction for the work of the Regional Centre
- Approve the Regional Centre’s implementation plan
- Promote the establishment of FE national committees
- Facilitate the interaction among national committees, regional entities and the broader global Future Earth network in coordination with the Regional Centre
- Identify, review and approve partnerships with regional and national entities as well as endorsements of events for sponsorship/partnership in coordination with the Regional Centre
- Provide guidance on the establishment of new sub-regional entities and national entities in Asia

3. Relationship of the Regional Committee and the Regional Centre

The Regional Committee approves and oversees the implementation plan of the Regional Centre for Future Earth in Asia. The Regional Centre provides operational support for the RC, ensures that the RC is kept up to date with the developments within the region and will coordinate and implement Future Earth priorities in the region.

The Future Earth Regional Centre in Asia is hosted by the Research Institute for Humanity and Nature (RIHN), and as such RIHN provides management oversight over the personnel and budget administration for the Regional Centre.
4. Membership

The Regional Committee consists of up to 15 members. They will initially be identified through an open call and selected by an independent committee outside of the RAC and the Regional Centre. Subsequent changes in membership will be selected by the sitting committee members.

Ex-officio members of the Regional Committee include directors of the Regional Centre for Future Earth in Asia, Future Earth Tokyo Global Hub, Future Earth sub-regional offices and Director General of RIHN.

The Regional Committee can also designate co-opted members on temporary appointment to be part of the committee.

4.1 Criteria for selection

▪ Have a strong commitment to and understanding of global and regional sustainability issues as reflected in rich experience in research or practice
▪ Have ample experience in managing and/or governing organizations or projects
▪ Have a track record in transcending disciplinary, sectoral, and national boundaries
▪ Have demonstrated experience in the development of local, regional and global activities and networks
▪ Well-networked at the regional and international level to support implementation of Future Earth’s vision in Asia
▪ Availability and motivation to serve Future Earth (participate in at least one face-to-face meeting, attend online meetings/teleconferences per year, occasional attendance to workshops).

Future Earth is particularly seeking to achieve balance in terms of geography, gender, disciplines and expertise of its representatives. The RC should include natural and social scientists, as well as societal partners. At least 30% of the membership should come from outside the academic and research fields. To ensure continuity and collective memory of the Regional Advisory Committee, initial selection will include 3-5 of the current RAC members.

4.2 Application and Selection Process for the First Year

The Regional Center will undertake an open call for nominations to the Regional Committee. The current RAC members are eligible to be nominated or self-nominate.

A selection body will be organized external to the Regional Centre for Future Earth in Asia and separate from the Regional Advisory Committee. This Selection body would identify and select the nominees before final endorsement from Future Earth Executive Team of the Global Secretariat.
4.3 Terms of Appointment
For the initial appointment, existing RAC members selected to be part of the RC will have a term of 2 years while new members will have 3 years. The regular appointment terms thereafter are for 3 years, renewable once. New and additional members will be selected by sitting members. To ensure continuity and to retain committee collective memory, at any given time the turnover should not exceed 40% of members per year, with a minimum of 2 member rotations per year after the third year.

The Chair will be selected internally by the RC members. He or she can be appointed for an equivalent number of his/her membership term, and renewed for an additional term of 3 years.

5. Decision Making
The Regional Committee will strive to take decisions by consensus. In the event that unanimity cannot be reached then decisions will be taken by a simple majority vote. Only full members have voting rights.

A quorum for a vote requires a minimum of two thirds of the Regional Committee members to participate in person, face-to-face or via teleconference.

Appointment of new members requires a quorum vote.

6. Meetings
The RC will have at least 1 face to face meeting annually, complemented by webinars/virtual calls as needed.

The travel costs for the RC meetings will be covered by the Regional Centre in Asia in principle.

7. Modification of the TOR
The Regional Committee has the power with majority vote to make amendments to this document.