
PART IV:

APFED ACTION PLATFORM

1. INTRODUCTION

Most of the recommendations contained in the preceding chapters will need to be realised over a long period at the regional, subregional, national, and local levels, taking into account future political, economic, social, and environmental conditions. The recommendations in the main report suggest long-term and broad directions in which this region as a whole should move to attain sustainable societies. Now the key question is what needs to be done as a first step to turn these recommendations into reality. The APFED Action Platform serves that purpose. It proposes an action framework, within which APFED could take immediate action in the coming five years as a follow-up to the APFED recommendations. The Action Platform aims to facilitate and nurture sustainability initiatives in the region by acting on the recommendations contained in this Report. Its ultimate objective is to initiate APFED II to mobilise the region from within and stimulate the drive for sustainable development.

Given its significant population size and rapidly expanding economy, the Asia-Pacific region obviously holds the key to realising a sustainable world. Global sustainability cannot be conceived without ensuring that Asia-Pacific countries continue on a sustainable growth path. However, the sustainable societies APFED envisages for the future of the region will not be the same as those considered for other regions of the world. Rather, future sustainable societies of the region will be diverse, and will take various forms, reflecting the extant socio-cultural and natural differences. Sustainable societies will be economically dynamic, and yet modest in their use of natural resources. They will be democratic, equitable, and sensitive to local cultures. To realise diversified futures of this kind, the framework proposed by the Action Platform should be truly participatory, encouraging mutual learning, and promoting innovation, while ensuring diversity for future generations.

APFED is only a modest initiative but it is an important, participatory, and open regional forum. Its messages are not to be imposed upon governments, international organisations, or any other stakeholders in the region. Rather, APFED in its second stage intends to be, as agreed upon at the ECO ASIA 2004 held in Yonago, Japan a “*knowledge management*” and “*innovation facilitation*” centre of the region. The value of APFED recommendations lies in the belief that continuing dialogue with key stakeholders, sharing experiences and wisdom with others, and proposing challenging new ideas will make this region more sustainable in the long run. In this respect, APFED will continue to be an advocate of a sustainable Asia-Pacific, seeking implementation of its recommendations in the main report in collaboration with like-minded stakeholders.

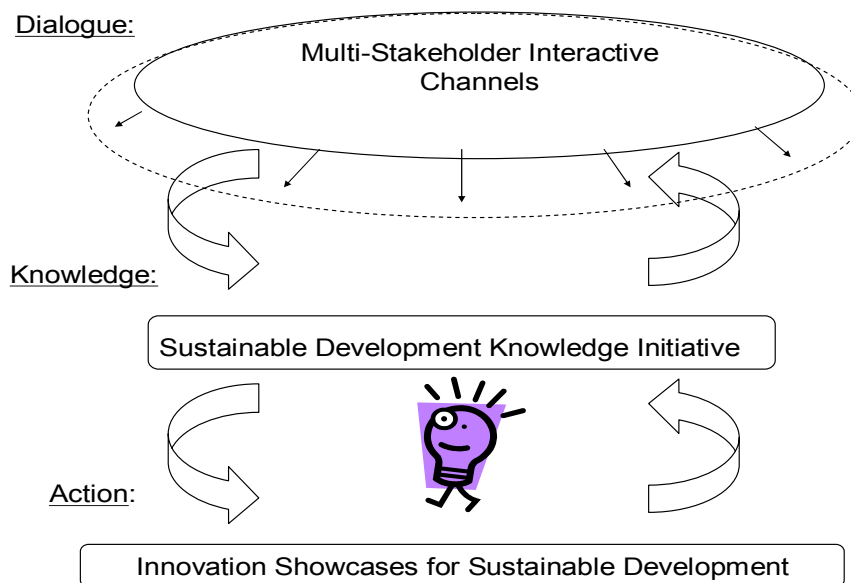
2. THREE MECHANISMS OF THE PLATFORM

The APFED Action Platform consists of the following broad mechanisms:

- Multi-Stakeholder Interactive Channels,
- Sustainable Development Knowledge Initiative,
- Innovation Showcases for Sustainable Development.

These three mechanisms are mutually complementary. The *Multi-Stakeholder Interactive Channels* will be set up to facilitate discussions on innovative policies and ideas among various stakeholders in the region. Those innovative policies and ideas are collected, analysed, and updated by the *Sustainable Development Knowledge Initiative*. The *Innovation Showcases for Sustainable Development* will serve as a source of innovative policies and ideas by trying out various innovations in the field. Lessons learned through showcase projects will be fed back to the *Sustainable Development Knowledge Initiative* (Figure 42). Indeed, this combination of the three mechanisms will give APFED a comparative strength as a “*knowledge management*” and “*innovation facilitation*” centre.

Figure 42: Three Mechanisms of APFED Action Platform



The Multi-Stakeholder Interactive Channels are “*the interactive window of APFED.*” The channels are proposed as an informal network of experts from different countries and of different backgrounds because APFED members see an increasing need in the region for more open and constructive discussions among different stakeholders. APFED believes that the current levels of discussion are still far from sufficient, and mainly dominated by public sector organisations. The Multi-Stakeholder Interactive Channels are to be composed of a variety of consultation processes involving relevant stakeholders to exchange views and opinions held by different stakeholders, to discuss priority issues for sustainable development, and to deliberate on ways and means of addressing the priority issues for the betterment of the region.

The Sustainable Development Knowledge Initiative is intended to be “*the brain of APFED II.*” The Initiative will collect lessons and experience from innovative sustainable actions implemented in the region, extract wisdom from the lessons learned, and share that wisdom with all stakeholders concerned. It will be an engine to generate internal human capacity in the region for sustainable development. Sustainable development of the region will be less resource-dependent and more knowledge-based, thus generation, storage, and use of knowledge will be the most important element for a sustainable Asia-Pacific. Indeed, human capacity building is essential for the region to turn its huge population into proactive agents for sustainable development.

The Innovation Showcases for Sustainable Development will be “*the implementation arm of APFED II.*” The Innovation Showcases will provide opportunities for recommendations included in the main report and innovative ideas proposed by other stakeholders to be put into practice on a pilot basis. Innovative policies, technologies, and practices will be tried on an experimental basis to verify if they do, in fact, fit into different political, economic, social, and natural conditions of a country or an area to which such ideas are applied. The Innovation Showcases are a conduit by which innovative policies, technologies, and practices, in particular those recommended in the previous chapters, are piloted and incubated. Based on the outcomes, appropriate innovations can then be scaled up for application to different parts of the region.

As stated above, APFED always seeks collaboration with other stakeholders. The three mechanisms mentioned above will be implemented in a flexible manner, drawing on existing similar initiatives undertaken by like-minded actors in the region. Multi-Stakeholders Interactive Channels are basically open to all stakeholders concerned, databases developed under the Sustainable Development Knowledge Initiative

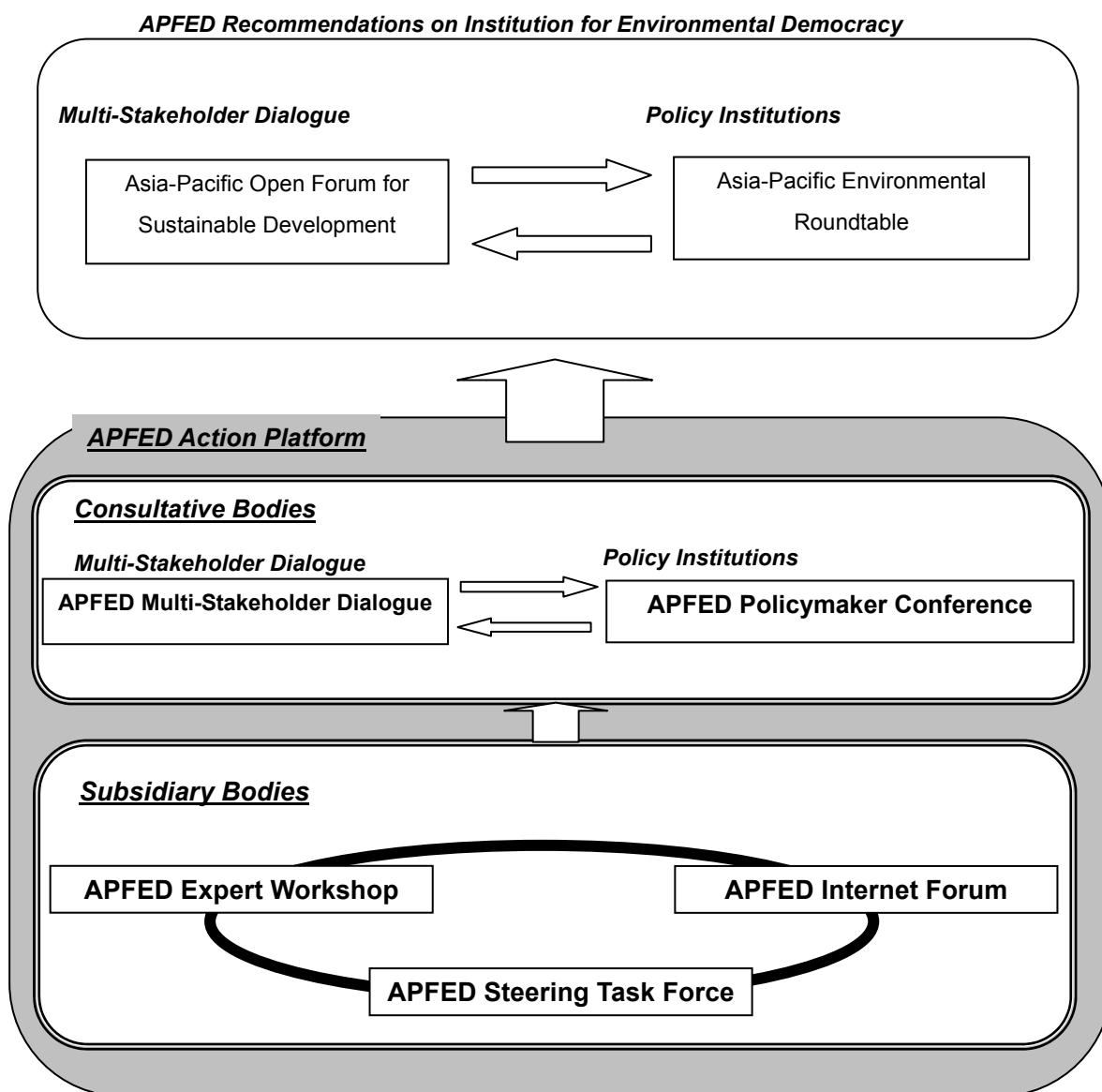
will be shared with all stakeholders interested, and pilot projects supported by the Innovation Showcases will always be put into practice jointly with other stakeholders.

3. MULTI-STAKEHOLDER INTERACTIVE CHANNELS

APFED is not a decision-making body. It is an informal catalyst to promote sustainable future societies for the region. APFED is, therefore, aware that further and more detailed consultations are necessary to make its recommendations a reality. Indeed, the Multi-Stakeholder Interactive Channels are proposed for continued policy discussions with stakeholders in the region recognising this need. The Interactive Channels are proposed as a tentative initiative and could be developed, if proven effective, into forums proposed in the “Institution for Environmental Democracy” for Asia-Pacific (*See Section A, Part III of this report*).

The Multi-Stakeholder Channels will consist of two consultative bodies, paralleling the suggestions contained in Part III of this report with regard to institutional strengthening for the region. The two consultative bodies are: (i) **the APFED Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue** and (ii) **the APFED Policymakers Conference**. These two bodies will function, in tandem, to address key sustainability issues in a time-bound manner. In addition, there will be three subsidiary bodies to support the two consultative bodies. They are (i) **APFED Expert Workshops**, (ii) **the APFED Internet Forum**, and (iii) **the APFED Steering Task Force**. Expert workshops will be held as necessary to conduct detailed analysis on subjects raised by the two consultative bodies. The APFED Internet Forum will be used as necessary to solicit views and opinions from the public on important subjects selected by the two consultative bodies (Figure 43). A Secretariat will be established to anchor the interrelated activities of APFED.

Figure 43: Multi-Stakeholder Interactive Channels



A. APFED Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue

The APFED Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue will be a loose and flexible gathering of interested individuals from civil society groups, the private sector, and the public sector (specifically central governments, international organisations, and local governments). There have been a number of initiatives taken in the region, particularly by international organisations such as the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), to invite various stakeholders to discuss issues concerning sustainable development. The proposed Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue is designed to strengthen and complement such efforts.

The APFED Steering Committee (See “C3 APFED Steering Task Force” on p.184-185), taking into account the nature of the issues to be discussed and the need for geographical balance, will select the participants. Each year, a multi-stakeholder dialogue will be organised to discuss impending issues regarding sustainable development in the region, exchange diverse views and opinions held by different stakeholders, set priority issues to be addressed, and identify areas of agreement and disagreement among participating stakeholders.

Some priority issues will be referred to the APFED Policymakers Conference and the APFED Expert Workshops for more detailed examination. Additional multi-stakeholder dialogues will be called upon, whenever necessary, to discuss findings and recommendations of detailed analyses conducted by the APFED Policymakers Conference and/or the APFED Expert Workshops. One of the early issues to be discussed by the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue will be strategies for promoting synergistic stakeholder participation (Box 59).

B. APFED Policymakers Conference

The APFED Policymakers Conference will comprise of a group of selected executive officials from governments in the region and international organisations working for the region. Participants could vary according to the agenda selected for each meeting. The Conference will take up priority issues from the APFED Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue or any other issues considered important for governments in the region. The Conference will act as a forum for constructive exchange of views and opinions, and put emphasis on open discussions among officials participating. It will examine relevant policy issues in an unofficial and on a noncommittal basis. The Conference will discuss public actions needed to address trans-boundary issues and issues common to many countries in the region, and examine possible ways to narrow or resolve points of disagreement.

Box 59: Asia-Pacific Multi-Stakeholders Dialogue for Synergistic Participation

Stakeholder participation is a key to sustainable development. Yet, in the Asia-Pacific region, the level of participation in agenda-setting, policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation is not adequate. How to organise stakeholder participation for sustainable development is a difficult question.

Stakeholder participation need not be the same as in western countries. Indeed, forms of participation could vary from country to country, reflecting different political, social, economic, and other factors. Modalities of participation could have different stages according to levels of democracy and economic development.

A series of multi-stakeholder dialogues could be held to discuss feasible ways to promote participation. Key issues of concern among participants could include:

- Different modalities of participation according to different political processes, i.e., agenda setting, decision making, implementation, and evaluation;
- Access to environmental information—in particular, those held by public bodies—and the need to develop a regional convention similar to the Aarhus Convention (For more detail, see Section B, Chapter I of Part III of this report) to ensure access;
- Basic policies to stimulate participation of stakeholders for sustainable development, including those related to the legal status of civil society organisations (CSOs), and tax exemptions for business donations to CSOs.

The Conference will be held at least once a year. Care should be taken to link the Policymakers Conference to existing official government processes, both regional and subregional, to ensure that discussions made at the Conference will be fed into formal deliberations in a timely and synergistic fashion.

Increasingly, common actions are now required for the sustainable development of the region, making the list of issues to be discussed at the Policymakers Conference practically endless. Given its strategic importance, sustainable financing mechanisms for the region could be one of the early agenda items for the Conference to address (Box 60).

Box 60: Asia-Pacific Environmental Finance Roundtable

Developed and developing nations as well as relevant financial institutions should gather together to discuss innovative financial mechanisms to promote environmental conservation and sustainable development in the region. Some of the financial mechanisms suggested in Part III of this report could have potential application in the region.

One focus would be regional or subregional mechanisms to address cross-boundary environmental issues. The need for scale and nature of possible regional/subregional funds would be scrutinised. Trans-boundary environmental issues to be covered by such funds could be clearly defined, and operational principles, such as co-financing and the incremental costs approach, could be agreed upon, taking into account experience with the Global Environment Facility and other international finance mechanisms. Introducing innovative financing mechanisms similar to those in the Kyoto Protocol into regional/subregional environmental issues could also be discussed.

Another focus would be how to create its own internal financial mechanisms suggested in Part III of this report (*See Section D, Chapter 1 of Part III*). Good practices for financing local environmental projects within the region would be collected and analysed to draw experiences and lessons out of past and ongoing attempts. Practitioners of innovative environmental financing must be involved in this dialogue.

Alternatively, the initial concern of the finance roundtable could be in relation to renewable energy because there is an urgent need to:

- Examine innovative combinations of financial instruments, including governmental subsidies plus local development funds and end-user fees, or a combination of subsidies with loans;
- Introduce policies enabling emissions trading and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) when the Kyoto Protocol is put into effect;
- Create specific funding or market mechanisms that would bring renewable energy technologies onto a competitive footing with fossil fuels.

C. Subsidiary Bodies

C.1 APFED Expert Workshop

A series of expert meetings will be held to conduct detailed analyses of issues identified either through the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue or by the APFED Policymakers Conference. Expert workshops will bring together scientists, policy analysts, economists, and other experts, depending on the issues in question.

A quick survey or study will be conducted, if necessary, to collect additional information. The Good Practice Databases and other knowledge-based mechanisms developed under the Sustainable Development Knowledge Initiative presented in section IV below will be fully used. Papers summarising experts' views will be prepared and submitted for further deliberation at the APFED Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue or the APFED Policymakers Conference

C.2 APFED Internet Forum

An APFED Internet Forum will be organised to solicit views and comments from other stakeholders and the general public inside and outside of the region on key issues identified by the APFED Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue and/or the APFED Policymakers Conference. Draft final reports of the APFED Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue or other APFED consultative bodies usually will be put up on the APFED website for public comments. Views received through the Internet Forum will be taken into account in finalising reports.

C.3 APFED Steering Task Force

The APFED Steering Task Force will coordinate and manage the interactive activities mentioned above, as

well as activities planned under the Sustainable Development Knowledge Initiative and the Innovation Showcases for Sustainable Development elaborated below. The Task Force will consist of the Steering Committee and a Secretariat. The Steering Committee will be composed of selected eminent persons from countries in the Asia-Pacific region. It will be responsible for providing overall guidance regarding APFED activities, setting APFED milestones, and monitoring progress. The Secretariat will be composed of a modest number of international staff responsible for day-to-day management of APFED activities.

4. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT KNOWLEDGE INITIATIVE

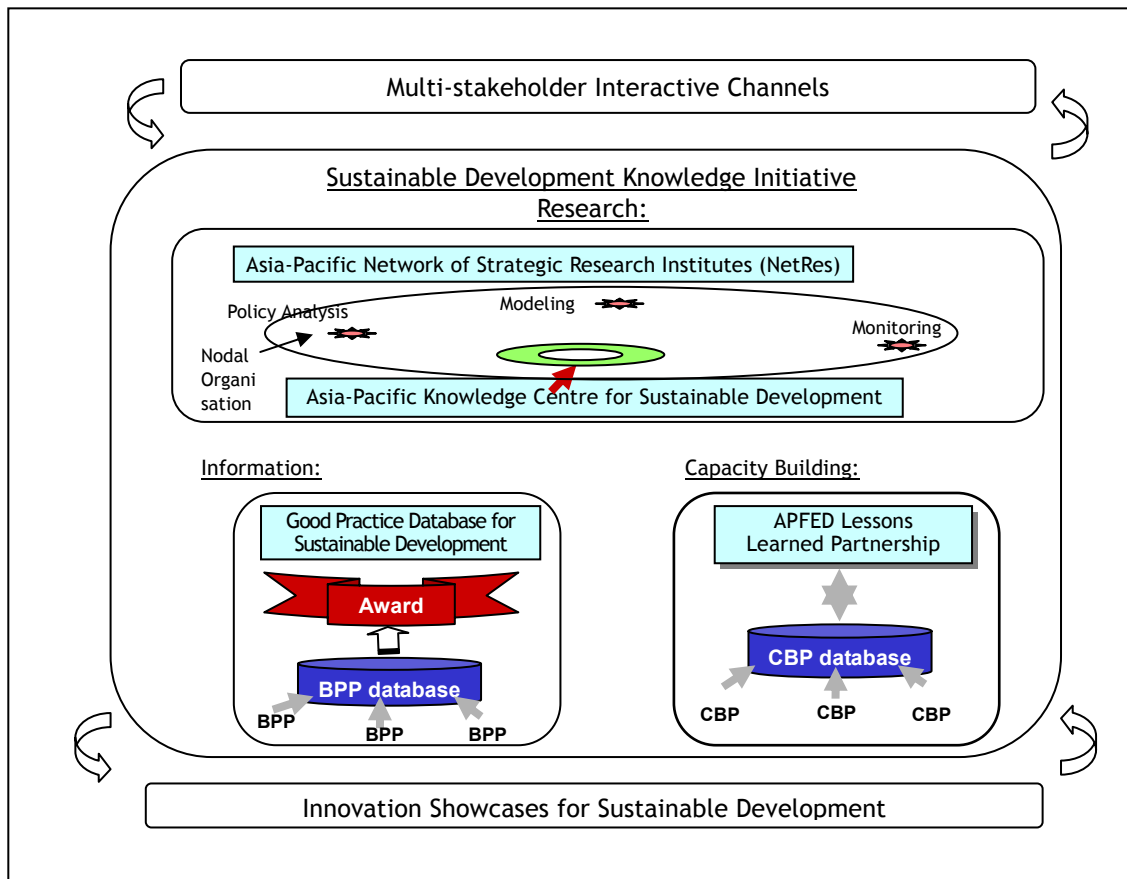
The Asia-Pacific region is characterised by its rich natural and socio-cultural diversity as well as by its huge population. To turn these features into strengths, a strong knowledge management system needs to be in place in the region. Systematic knowledge management is the only way to translate rich and diversified lessons learned through various initiatives at the local, national and regional levels into internal capacity essential for the continuing quest for sustainable development. Indeed, global sustainability depends on how successful this region will be in building internal capacity in terms of institutions, systems and human resources for the effective handling of its sustainable development agenda.

The proposed Sustainable Development Knowledge Initiative will enable internal capacity building in the region to promote sustainable development through the establishment of an effective knowledge management system. It will draw upon three APFED Commitments (*see Appendix 1 of this report*) contained in the APFED Message to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, or WSSD, held in August/September 2002. It will consist of (i) the Good Practices Database for Sustainable Development, (ii) Strategic Policy Research, and (iii) the APFED Lessons Learned Partnership (Figure 44). These activities correspond to the “information research capacity building” dimensions of knowledge management. As a “*knowledge management*” and “*innovation facilitation*” centre of the region, APFED II will:

- Intensify efforts to collect information on successes and failures of policies and projects for sustainable development;
- Take a lead to conduct joint research on strategic policies to promote sustainable development;
- Take a catalytic role in sharing knowledge and experiences for sustainable development with key stakeholders in the region.

The Good Practices Database for Sustainable Development will be a collection and analysis of best policy practices (BPPs) for promoting a sustainable Asia-Pacific. The strategic policy research will be conducted making full use of networks of researchers and research institutions (NetRes) engaged in innovative policy developments for sustainable development. The APFED Lessons Learned Partnership will be built upon development of an inventory of capacity building programmes (CBPs) for sustainable development of the region. These three APFED commitments have been acted upon in various degrees by APFED over the two years since WSSD. A strategy should be developed for the dissemination of BPPs and CBPs not only through the use of the internet but also through the use the multi-lateral forum at the national and regional level. These BPPs need to be disseminated at the local level also in order to realise their full potential.

Figure 44: Sustainable Development Knowledge Initiative



A. Good Practices Database for Sustainable Development

The first pillar of the APFED Knowledge Initiative is the Good Practices Database for Sustainable Development. Good practices introduced in the region, at both policy and project levels, will be systematically collected, stored, updated, and disseminated to various stakeholders. Future development patterns in the region will not be uniform and cannot be standardised. Rather they will take various forms reflecting the diversity of each locality. Thus, a systematic database on good practices applied in the region, which are rich in variety and filled with hints of innovations, are likely to become a stimulating source of knowledge for effective sustainable development. Examples of unsuccessful cases, as appropriate, should also be included in the database so that mistakes can be rectified in their application in the future.

APFED has already started setting up a BPP database, which has documented about 200 cases practised in the region. To strengthen the database, broader sets of good policies and practices for sustainable development will be collected through various channels. Areas covered by the strengthened database will be expanded to include all important sustainability issues.

An APFED Award is proposed to provide incentives for civil society groups and other key players in the region who will provide APFED with updated information on a continuous basis, on their initiatives, for inclusion into the BPP database. In addition, formal recognition will be given to all good practices selected for inclusion in the database. Award-winning practices will be filmed so that useful lessons gained through such practices can be shared with all interested organisations and individuals through the mass media and other communication channels.

The collection of good practices and the APFED Award may contribute to strengthening the networking of civil society organisations (CSOs) in the region. This side benefit is important, given the relatively weak capacities of CSOs in the region.

B. Strategic Policy Research

There is an enormous need for strategic research in the region to underpin innovative policies for sustainable development. Such research has to be interdisciplinary, since sustainable development cuts across economic, social, and environmental concerns. It has to be supranational, as economic, social, and environmental conditions vary vastly from country to country. Moreover, it must be designed so that the impacts of policies can be objectively analysed, i.e., in accordance with the “Pressure-State-Response” framework.

Obviously no single institute can meet all these conditions, but extensive networking of research institutes in the region could address a common research agenda. APFED is already committed to establishing a network of research institutes of the region (NetRes; see Box 61 below). However, networking alone cannot provide the solution. Research networks have to be energised by joint research activities. A good example is the research on Asia-Pacific Environmental Innovation Strategies (APEIS) initiated by Tenth Environment Congress for Asia and the Pacific (ECO ASIA 2001). APEIS is a regional research project involving several research institutes in the region. It has three distinctive sub-projects in accordance with the “Pressure-State-Response” framework, i.e., integrated modelling looking at “pressures,” integrated monitoring examining “state” of the environment, and innovative policies development for “response.” ECO ASIA 2004, held in Yonago, Japan, recommended that a second stage APEIS II be fully integrated in the APFED Action Platform.

Box 61: Asia-Pacific Network of Strategic Research Institutes

The Asia-Pacific Network of Strategic Research Institutes (NetRes) was one of the APFED commitments to WSSD. The APFED Secretariat, under the guidance of APFED members, must:

- Identify all strategic research institutes involved in the APFED process, complemented by other relevant institutes;
- Hold a first meeting of research institutes in the Asia-Pacific region. Such a meeting could be jointly supported by governments through voluntary contributions made via the APFED Secretariat;
- Designate, as soon as the network is established, one of the participating institutes as the host of NetRes and serve as the liaison office;
- Develop a website linking members to enable electronic communication and exchange of information. This website would also be managed by the designated host institute.

Source: APFED Message to the World Summit on Sustainable Development

As “innovation facilitation” is the central focus of APFED, strategic policy research should revolve around innovation. Drawing upon innovations in environmental monitoring technologies and in policy analysis using computer modelling, APEIS II will aim at, amongst other things, (i) integrated monitoring of environmental resources in selected watershed areas for objective comparison of local regenerative capacities and local human demand, (ii) analysis of the impacts of further regional integration of trade and investment on ecosystems and freshwater resources, and (iii) identification of relevant policy instruments and mechanisms for mitigating against potentially negative impacts of economic integration in the region, while enhancing positive impacts (Box 62).

Partnerships formed between and among research institutes, international bodies, and other competent organisations in the region will spearhead the research. In March 2004, UNEP, in collaboration with the Korean Environment Institute, organised a first-ever meeting of research institutes on trade and environment prior to UNEP’s Third Global Environment Ministers Conference in Jeju, Republic of Korea. Exploring possible collaboration among the various research institutes active in “trade and environment” related research was timely.

**Box 62: Joint Research on Integrated Environmental Policy Design
in Economically Integrated Asia**

The Asia-Pacific region has seen an unprecedented surge in bilateral and regional trade arrangements seeking further liberalisation and expansion of economic activities. Bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements (FTAs), and new economic groupings such as the East-Asia Economic Community, are in the making, all of which will fundamentally alter the dynamics of opportunities and constraints for sustainable development.

To date, environmental issues have not been prioritised under trade negotiations and economic integration of East Asia. A joint regional study will help those directly involved in negotiations become more aware of the environmental consequences of FTAs and long-term economic integration of the region. The joint research could provide a foundation, upon which environmental concerns are taken into account as an essential element of long-term economic integration and sustainable development. Components of the joint research can include:

- Analysis of environmental policy harmonisation in Europe and North America;
- Identification of possible environmental implications of FTAs and regional economic integration;
- Assessment of response capacity of existing environmental policies and institutions;
- Elaboration of environmental policies effective in mitigating negative impacts, and those compatible with economic integration (e.g., region-wide recycling and promotion of fair trade).

Research findings often do not reach policymakers directly, but need translation into an actionable policy agenda. An excellent example of this process is the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), in which results of various climate change studies are critically assessed, and essential recommendations are proposed for policy deliberations. Now that the WSSD process has scheduled rotating sectoral reports, the region should begin to prepare relevant synthetic papers in conjunction with global deliberations. One such example is the development of an Asia-Pacific Water Development Report (Box 63).

Blindly following the global sustainability agenda is not good enough for the region. The Asia-Pacific region has its own priorities for sustainable development and synthesis of research findings on those priority issues is of particular importance. For example, sustainable financing and synergistic stakeholder participation could be among such priority issues for the region.

Box 63: Asia-Pacific Water Development Report

Asia-Pacific Water Development Report (APWDR) will enhance understanding of current water-related problems and challenges in the Asia-Pacific region. APWDR will be produced in collaboration with concerned organisations and networks in the region.

The report will compile existing information on the state of water resources. It will identify regional priority issues and ways and means of addressing these issues through joint effort by key stakeholders, keeping in mind historical, social, and economic constraints surrounding water resources management in the region.

APWDR will serve as the basic document upon which stakeholders will reinforce a commitment to integrated water management of freshwater resources in the region.

(Readers could also refer to the section J. on Freshwater Resources of Part III.)

C. APFED Lessons Learned Partnership

No project is useful unless the intended results are delivered. Results-based management has become a world norm. It requires continuous learning from successes and failures of projects practised in the field. Lessons learned are then used in designing and implementing future projects. This virtual circle of “doing and learning” will lead to an upward evolution to continually enhance the quality of future projects. In this respect, APFED has recommended the promotion of “Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation” in the section of the main report on “Systems Development for Partnership” (*See page 66 of this report*).

A partnership among different stakeholders in the region is proposed to learn together lessons from the past and ongoing projects. Lessons will be extracted from the good practices database and evaluation of innovative initiatives supported by the “Innovation Showcases for Sustainable Development” elaborated below. Extracted lessons will be developed into effective training materials and the materials developed will be used by various training programmes, thereby establishing a “do-learn-improve” cycle in the region.

The Lessons Learned Partnership will try to expand collaboration with training institutes and programmes operating in the region for the promotion of sustainable development. In this connection, APFED has already started preparing a database on CBPs for the region, and the database has identified quite a number of institutes and their training programmes. Efforts will continue with regard to the regular updating of CBP so that potential users can get comprehensive and updated information regarding capacity building opportunities available in the region. Collaboration will be sought with training institutes and programmes to jointly develop training materials such as a series of papers, films, and e-learning materials, and to conduct executive training courses for future leaders of the region. Furthermore, the Lessons Learned Partnership will generate opportunities for all the training institutes to get together to exchange views and opinions on how this lessons-learned exercise could be promoted further for the region.

5. INNOVATION SHOWCASES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

There have been many innovative ideas for building sustainable societies, and some of them are included as recommendations in this report. Unfortunately, few of these innovative policies, technologies, and practices are implemented in full. Uncertainty is one barrier to their introduction. In other cases, losses that may impinge on certain stakeholders may generate resistance to innovations. Also existing institutions may prefer gradual modifications rather than drastic changes. Still it must be obvious that countries in the region have to accommodate innovation to promote sustainability. The question is not whether innovations are necessary for the region, but how soon such innovations will need to be introduced.

The Innovation Showcases are an attempt to address the barriers mentioned above. The showcases will provide opportunities to pilot innovative policies, technologies, and practices for sustainable development in the field. An innovative policy/technology/practice that has been successful in one country will not necessarily work in other countries because of underlying differences in political, social, economic, and other conditions. Hence, it is worthwhile to try innovative policies, technologies, and practices on an experimental basis to determine if such innovations can actually deliver the intended results, and if they generate any unintended negative effects. Careful analysis of showcase projects will generate sensible solutions to effectively deal with potential barriers, and confidently allow the Innovation Showcases to facilitate adoption of innovative policies, technologies, and practices.

The Innovation Showcases for Sustainable Development are composed, inter alia of three initiatives in accordance with different modes of innovation:

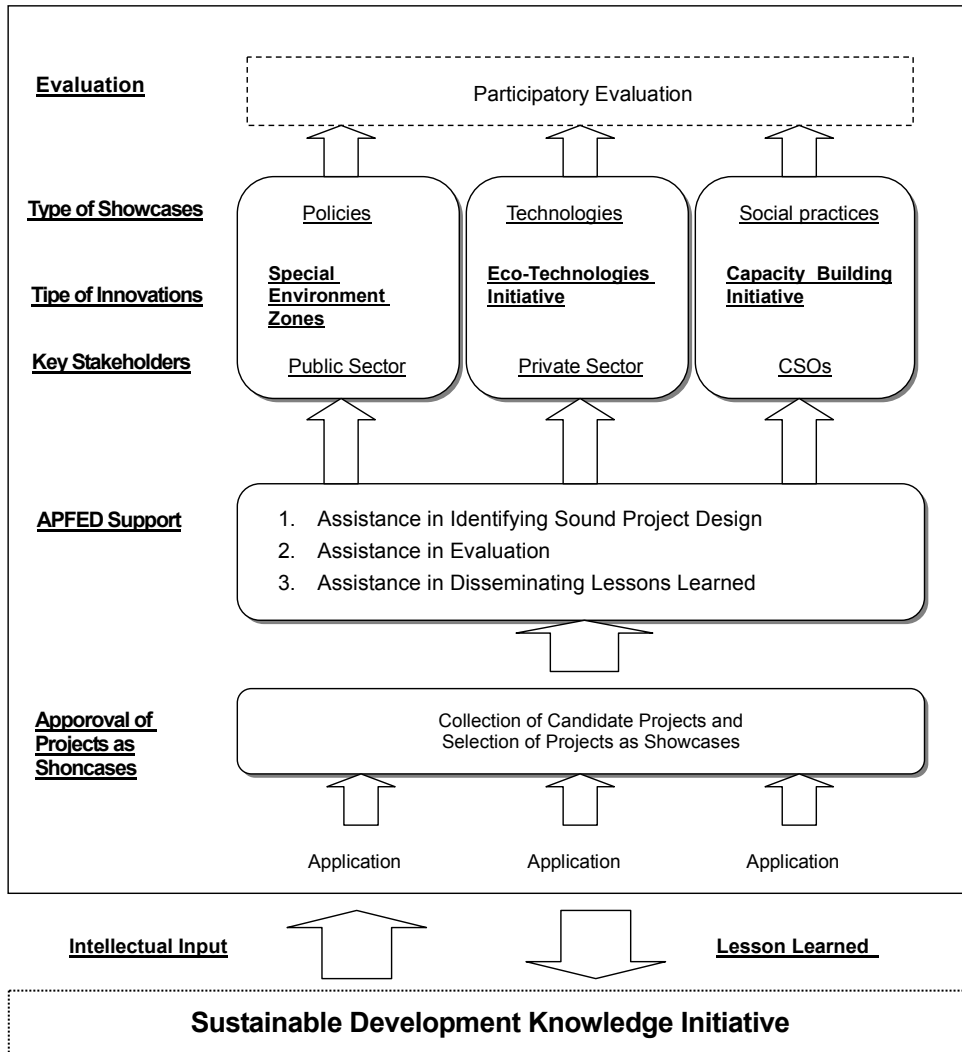
- Special Environment Zones for Innovative Policies,
- Eco-Technologies Initiative for Innovative Technologies,

➤ Capacity Building Initiative for Innovative Social Practices.

Each recommendation in this report assumes a public body (i.e., national government, local authority, or international organisation), private enterprise, or CSO will be available or created to implement the recommendation. The Special Environment Zones (SEZs) aim at promoting innovative policies, and are intended, therefore, to serve the public sector. The Eco-Technologies Initiative is intended to provide opportunities for assessing the feasibility of innovative technologies. Since technologies are mostly controlled by the private sector, this initiative mainly serves the private sector. The Capacity Building Initiative is a mechanism to experiment with innovative social practices, which are mostly conducted by NGOs and other civil society groups for improved environmental governance. Thus, the Capacity Building Initiative envisages CSOs as the main proponents (Figure 45).

Given the nature of showcase projects, a sound evaluation process has to be introduced. Aside from proving the feasibility of an innovative idea, evaluation findings may provide answers to key questions asked by important stakeholders, and indicate how the idea could be modified for more extended application. Participatory evaluation is essential to elicit diverse views and opinions and seek consensus on the applicability of the innovative idea in other areas.

Figure 45: Innovation Showcases for Sustainable Development



APFED’s association with these demonstration projects merits careful discussion. APFED itself is neither an implementing nor a funding body. It is a forum to catalyse innovative initiatives to promote sustainable societies in the region. APFED should limit itself to the “knowledge management” role, which includes (i) assistance in coming up with sound project design, (ii) assistance in evaluating successes and failures of showcase projects, and (iii) assistance in disseminating lessons learned. APFED proposes to set up a small grant facility to deliver the intellectual inputs needed to start innovative projects selected for the Innovation Showcases Initiative.

The Knowledge Initiative discussed above should be instrumental in providing intellectual inputs for the Innovation Showcases. The Knowledge Initiative could help develop selection guidelines for showcase projects, and make timely inputs into project design and evaluation. The Innovation Showcases provide, in return, valuable information to the Knowledge Initiative regarding effectiveness of new policies, technologies, and practices.

A. Special Environment Zones

Policies are intended to change behaviour in a defined direction. Thus, affected interest groups who fear the potential adverse changes caused by the policy often resist nationwide legislation. As a result, only gradual political change (incrementalism) takes place in many countries in the region. Experience has shown that

successful experimentation with innovations in limited geographical areas of a country or across countries could ultimately expedite widespread adoption in the region.

SEZs are showcases of innovative policies for conservation and sustainable development in a country or across countries in the region. In order to set up these SEZs, they first need to be pilot tested at the local level in order to check their feasibility and applicability in the local and national context. Certain areas of a country (e.g., cities, islands, river basins) could be designated as a SEZ, in which unproven yet innovative environmental policies would be designed, experimented with, and monitored for their effectiveness. SEZs are expected to be a powerful conduit to put innovative environment policies into practice in the region.

Innovations potentially applied to SEZs could be new public policies including economic instruments such as emission charges, environment taxes, river basin taxes, or emissions trading. Alternatively, they could introduce innovative institutions and systems, such as new recycling systems and new environmental management systems for protected areas. SEZs could go beyond national borders if the innovative policies are supranational in nature. Cross boundary trade of recyclable materials among cities in different countries could provide an example. SEZs could also be introduced at the subregional or regional level, involving countries with similar socio-economic conditions, resulting in mutual learning and potentially stimulating and constructive political discussions.

National legislation may be needed to introduce SEZs. Effective legislation would allow local governments to set up SEZs, according to guidelines set out by the national government, possibly in return for subsidies and tax exemptions. Alternatively, central governments could delegate responsibility to local governments to enable them to adopt innovative policies and practices on their own initiative.

B. Eco-Technologies Initiative

The Eco-Technologies Initiative analyses the feasibility of emerging innovative technologies for prevention, mitigation, and adaptation purposes. Technological leapfrogging is clearly necessary for this region to promote its sustainability agenda. Since the Asia-Pacific region is so diverse in natural and socio-cultural settings, it is imperative for each country to verify feasibilities of new technologies vis-à-vis local conditions.

Prevention and mitigation technologies will be demonstrated in the Eco-Industrial Parks (EIPs), whereas adaptation technologies will be demonstrated through the Eco-Restoration Technologies Initiative.

B.1 Eco-Industrial Parks

Eco-Industrial Parks (EIPs) would be showcases of innovative technologies for conservation and sustainable development in a country. New technologies or new technological systems developed for conservation and sustainable development would be introduced into designated areas to determine their social, economic, and other feasibility.

Technologies and systems to be tested could include those related to, for example, renewable energy (e.g., wind, solar, and biogas), and zero-emission industrial complexes (Box 64). Indigenous technologies should be also promoted, if applicable, under this initiative.

International cooperation will be a key factor for the success of EIPs because in many cases they will rely on technology transfer from developed to developing countries, through subsidiaries or joint venture partners in the private sector.

Successful technology transfer in EIPs depends on an enabling policy environment which provides, at least, an equal footing for new technologies, legislation that respects intellectual property rights, and environmental standards and regulations that are properly implemented.

Box 64: Clean Energy Islands

For many islands in the region, diesel is the main energy resource for electricity. In 2000, the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific (MCED), held in Kitakyushu, Japan, adopted a Regional Action Programme for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development (RAP), 2001-2005, which, among other things, called for a dedicated global project to create fully renewable energy, and hydrogen-based economies in the small island developing states of the Asia-Pacific region. A stable energy supply on many of these islands is possible through a combination of wind, wave, solar, and small-scale hydroelectric power. Such combined renewable energy systems could be established on selected islands as “showcases,” which could lead to replication in other islands in the region.

As a response to the Kitakyushu initiative, Vanuatu, a small South Pacific nation, announced its intention in October 2000 to build a hydrogen-based renewable energy economy by 2020. The country envisages its geothermal and hydroelectric potentials as alternative energy sources. The country is seeking partnerships with developed countries and leading industries to provide technology for this renewable energy strategy.

Source: Environmental News Service (ENS), 5 October, 2000

B.2 Eco-Restoration Initiative

Eco-restoration projects represent a new type of public works programme for rehabilitation of environmentally degraded areas of the region. Use of indigenous knowledge and technologies should be promoted whenever possible. The region’s degraded areas are constantly increasing due to desertification, salinisation, waterlogging, deforestation, and contamination. The need to rehabilitate such degraded areas will increase in the future as the population and economy expand. A modest pilot initiative could begin to address the massive challenges this region faces in rehabilitating degraded lands.

Pilot areas would be selected from among degraded lands of a nation according to their priority. Causes of degradation would be identified, rehabilitation plans prepared, rehabilitation technologies determined, necessary financing, including government subsidies, arranged, and actual rehabilitation conducted. However, the most important component of eco-restoration projects is stakeholder participation, without which the same mistakes that have caused degradation in the past could be repeated.

Although restoration technologies are developed mainly by the private sector, eco-restoration requires strong government support in terms of policy and finance. Following successful demonstration projects, it is hoped that governments in the region would shift their public works priorities to eco-restoration projects. Strict implementation of environmental impact assessments should curtail public works projects that create negative environmental impacts. Otherwise, the positive environmental services generated by eco-restoration projects will easily be nullified.

C. Capacity Building Initiative

There is widespread consensus that social capacity is one of the most important elements for promoting sustainable development in the region. Social capacity is related to the extent to which community groups, NGOs and other civil society organisations participate in decision-making and implementation of environmental management. For effective and meaningful participation of CSOs, enabling policy environment has to be established, and human capacities of CSOs have to be improved.

The Asia-Pacific region has enormous challenges to achieve sustainable development, and the role to be played by community groups and CSOs is essential. Already an increasing number of community groups and CSOs have started innovative initiatives in transforming the region into a sustainable one, but obviously, their efforts are still far from sufficient. It is for this reason that a Capacity Building Initiative is proposed as a part

of the APFED Innovation Showcases. It is intended to stimulate partnership between CSOs and other stakeholders (i.e., public bodies and the private sector) by piloting innovative social practices included in this report, and other ideas proposed by CSOs in various parts of the region.

The Capacity Building Initiative could cover three broad types of activities, i.e., (i) empowerment of community-based activities including introduction of the local eco-currency, and participatory composting and waste recycling; (ii) new modalities of stakeholder participation, such as joint management of protected areas, citizens' panels, and deliberative democracy; and (iii) effective approaches to human capacity development.

Effective human capacity development approaches include: (i) the integrated approach (i.e., a holistic approach to combine capacity development with environment monitoring and other local environmental initiatives); (ii) use of information and communications technologies (e.g., e-learning); (iii) the participatory approach (e.g., the involvement of NGOs, scientific organisations, and other local CSOs); and (iv) the international/regional approach (e.g., an inter-university credit system). This APFED report includes many actual recommendations along these lines.

6. NEXT STEPS

APFED is an ongoing initiative, and some of the activities contained in the three mechanisms proposed above are already in operation. In particular, the three activities under the Sustainable Development Knowledge Initiative i.e., (i) the Good Practices Database for Sustainable Development, (ii) Strategic Policy Research, and (iii) the APFED Lessons Learned Partnership, are basically enlarged extensions of the three APFED Commitments to WSSD, i.e., BPPs, CBPs, and NetRes. Therefore, these three activities are the ones APFED II will first address in terms of time sequence. Then, efforts will be made to set up and initiate the Multi-Stakeholders Dialogue and the Policymakers Conference. These forums will be built on, as much as possible, existing mechanisms such as the current APFED forum. These two APFED forums will provide, among other things, overall directions and basic guidance regarding the Innovation Showcases for Sustainable Development, based upon which innovative policies, technologies, and practices contained in this report will be piloted in various countries of the region.

APFED is a modest but important advocate for sustainability in Asia and the Pacific. Its messages are meaningful only when other stakeholders in the region join forces with APFED. In this respect, APFED continues to seek dialogues and collaboration with other stakeholders in the region. It believes that hope for the future exists in small initiatives already undertaken in many parts of the region. What matters is sensible ways to detect them, and effective mechanisms to nurture them. It is hoped APFED II will be successful in building on modest successes in the past, and using them to facilitate truly sustainable societies for the future.