e-ASIA Joint Research Program

(Approved Version)

Meeting Minutes of 14th Annual Board Meeting 2025

Summary of Reporting Agenda and Discussions

September 10–11, 2025

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Wednesday, 10 September 2025

15:15–16:30 (ICT, UTC+7)

Opening Session of 14ᵗʰ Annual Board Meeting

Time Period: 15:15 – 16:30

Session Moderator: Mr. Hideyuki Asano, e-ASIA JRP Secretariat

Rapporteur: MISTI, Cambodia

- The session opened with welcoming remarks from Dr. Socheat Keo (MISTI) and Ms. Reiko Yuguchi (e-ASIA Secretariat).

- Representatives from all Member Organizations (MOs) greeted the participants and introduced their respective institutions.

    1. NHMRC, Australia
    2. MISTI, Cambodia
    3. NSFC, China
    4. BRIN, Indonesia
    5. MEXT, Japan
    6. JST, Japan
    7. AMED, Japan
    8. MOSTI, Malaysia
    9. MOST, Myanmar
    10. DOST, Philippines
    11. A*STAR, Singapore
    12. NSTDA, Thailand
    13. NRCT, Thailand
    14. PMU-B, Thailand
    15. NIAID, USA
    16. MOST, Vietnam

The session concluded with closing remarks from Dr. Socheat Keo (MISTI).

Thursday, 11 September 2025

09:00 – 16:30 (ICT, UTC+7)

Remarks on Resumption of the ABM

Speaker: Dr. Socheat Keo, MISTI

- Dr. Keo welcomed the Board Members and delegates back and emphasized active participation, feedback sharing, and collaboration to strengthen the impact of the e-ASIA JRP through today's discussions.

Session 1: Annual Program Review

Time Period: 09:00 – 09:45

Session Moderator: Mr. Hideyuki Asano, e-ASIA JRP Secretariat

Rapporteur: e-ASIA JRP Secretariat

Reporting Agenda:

1) Agenda 1: 13th Annual Activity Report

2) Agenda 2: Amendment to the Program Statutes

3) Agenda 3: Selected projects of the 14th Call for Proposals

Reporting Summary of Session 1

1. Agenda 1: 13th Annual Activity Report

Mr. Asano presented the 13th Annual Activity Report, covering the period from 12 September 2024 to 31 August 2025, including the following points:

1.1   Program Administration

1.1.1   Conducted hybrid 13th Annual Board Meeting on 11–12 September 2024 at Grand Plaza Hanoi Hotel, Vietnam; 17 of 25 Member Organizations from 13 countries participated.

1.1.2   Conducted 42nd Ad Hoc Board Meeting via email correspondence on 7 October 2024, which by 16 October 2024, had approved the following:

- Draft minutes of the 13th Annual Board Meeting
- On-hold candidate proposals for the 13th Call
- Formal participation of the National Science Foundation of China (NSFC) as an official Member Organization

1.2   Current Member Organization

1.2.1   27 Member Organizations from 15 countries and 1 Guest Partner.

1.3   Joint Calls for Proposals

1.3.1   13th Call for Proposals (December 15, 2023–March 29, 2024)

- 13th Call for Agriculture: Out of 18 proposals, 3 projects approved for support.
- 13th Call for Alternative Energy: Out of 29 proposals, 3 projects approved for support.
- 13th Call for Health Research: Out of 52 proposals, 6 projects approved for support.
- 13th Call for Food and Health: Out of 16 proposals, 3 projects approved for support.

1.3.2   14th Call for Proposals (December 16, 2024–March 31, 2025), the following Fields of Cooperation and call topics were open:

- Alternative Energy (AE): *Hydrogen (Production & Storage; Biohydrogen & Hydrogen from Waste), Fuel (Biofuel & Aviation Fuel), and Energy Storage*
- Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DM): *Use of emerging technologies in disaster risk reduction and management*

- Health Research (HE): *Infectious Diseases and Immunology (including Antimicrobial Resistance)*

1.4   Preparatory Discussion for the 15th Joint Call for Proposals

1.5   Impact Assessment

1.6   Stakeholder Interaction on the International Research Synergy Workshop

Note: Further details on items 1.4, 1.5, and 1.6 will be reported under Session 2, Session 4, and Session 5, respectively.

2. Agenda 2: Amendment to the Program Statutes

The session proceeded with the reporting of Agenda 2 regarding the proposed amendment to the Program Statutes, specifically Article 4 on Membership of the Program. The first amendment pertains to the text on pages 3 and 4 of the Program Statutes as follows:

2.1   List of Member organization (Page 3)

2.1.1   4. The National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC), China[*4]

2.1.2   12. The Academy of Sciences Malaysia (ASM), Malaysia[*5]

2.2   Remarks (Page 4)

2.2.1   [*4]The National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) is officially recognized as a Member Organization of the e-ASIA JRP, as approved by the 42nd Ad Hoc Board Meeting on 16 October 2024.

2.2.2   [*5]The Academy of Sciences Malaysia (ASM) is formally appointed as MOSTI's official representative to the e-ASIA Joint Research Program as of 18 November 2024.

3. Agenda 3: Selected projects of the 14ᵗʰ Call for Proposals

This was followed by the final agenda item, presenting the outcomes of the 14th Call for Proposals based on the project selections determined during the 14ᵗʰ Joint Review Meetings held on 10 September.

    3.1   Outcomes of 14ᵗʰ Call for Proposals for endorsement:

        3.1.1   Health Research: 6 candidate proposals

        3.1.2   Alternative Energy: 4 candidate proposals

        3.1.3   Disaster Risk Reduction and Management: 4 candidate proposals

        3.1.4   2 on-hold candidate proposals (1 in HE, and 1 in AE)

Discussion Agenda of Session 1

BRIN (Indonesia)

- Requested clarification on the status of DIKBUDRISTEK, which has been divided into three newly established ministries, and whether notification from the former ministry would suffice or if new applications are required. Additionally, proposed that the e-ASIA Secretariat issue formal letters to the newly established ministries to provide guidance on the proper application process.

e-ASIA JRP Secretariat

- Emphasized the importance of confirming the status of all Member Organizations to ensure accurate representation and agreed that the Secretariat will issue formal letters to the newly established ministries to facilitate their participation, contingent upon BRIN providing the relevant focal person information.

Conclusion of Session 1

The session concluded with agreement that the Secretariat will follow up with BRIN to obtain the focal person information for the newly established ministries and issue formal letters to guide their participation. The Board reviewed the 13th Annual Activity Report,

considered the proposed amendments to the Program Statutes, and reported the outcomes of the 14th Call for Proposals. These items remained pending approval in the upcoming voting session, providing a clear framework for ensuring continuity and supporting the future development of joint research initiatives.

The session was concluded at 09:45 (ICT, UTC+7)

Session 2: Next Call for Proposals

Time Period: 09:45–10:30 (ICT, UTC+7)

Session Moderator: Ms. Reiko Yuguchi, e-ASIA JRP Secretariat

Rapporteur: e-ASIA JRP Secretariat

Reporting Agenda:

1) Agenda 1: Progress and Milestones
2) Agenda 2: Proposed Timeline
3) Agenda 3: 15th Call Development Workshop & Technical Call Text Development

Reporting Summary of Session 2

1. Agenda 1: Progress and Milestones

1.1   Ms. Yuguchi reported on the progress of preparing the 15th Call for Proposals, which commenced in April 2025 with the circulation of a questionnaire survey to gather Member Organizations' research priorities and interests.

1.2   By 29 April 2025, 13 Member Organizations had responded, covering all seven Fields of Cooperation. The results highlighted potential overlaps and opportunities for cross-field integration.

1.3   An initial online discussion was held on 24 June, which identified four candidate Fields: Alternative Energy, Agriculture, Environment, and Health Research.

1.4   A subsequent meeting in July finalized call topics and lead organizations for each field in preparation for the Call Development Workshop (CDW).

1.5   However, during CDW preparations, ASM (Malaysia) and DOST-PCAARRD (Philippines) withdrew from the Environment field, leaving participation below the required minimum. With consent from NSFC (China) and NRCT (Thailand), the Environment field was therefore excluded from the 15th Joint Call for Proposals.

2. Agenda 2: Proposed Timeline

2.1   The proposed timeline for the 14th and 15th Calls was presented, extending through to the announcement of successful projects for each Call. This timeline will take effect following the conclusion of ABM 2025.

3. Agenda 3: 15th Call Development Workshop and Technical Call Text Development

3.1   The outcomes of the CDW in the fields of Agriculture and Alternative Energy, and technical call text development via email correspondence in the Health Research stream were reported as follows:

Field of Cooperation: Health Research

Facilitator: NHMRC, Australia

Reporter: Dr. Nicholas Johnson, NHMRC, Australia

Agreed Call Topics and Research Areas:

1) Call Topic 1: Infectious Disease and Immunology

- Development of novel prevention strategies for combatting emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases, including development of vaccines and evaluation of the host immune response.

- Development of interventions to prevent or reduce the emergence or spread of antimicrobial resistance or to treat/cure infections caused by resistant bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites.

- Intersections between infectious and chronic disease, including lifestyle interventions, prevention and management strategies.

- Development of interventions, treatments, preventions and therapeutics for combatting allergic and immunologic diseases.

2) Call Topic 2: Advanced Medical Research and Enabling Technologies

- Safe, ethical, equitable application of AI in healthcare and medical research.

- Stem cell development and therapies

- Synthetic biology and genome editing technologies

- Ethical and regulatory implications of integration of rapidly emerging technologies in research and health care

- Development of policy and governance for emerging technologies in research and health care.

Participating Member Organizations:

Member Organization	Topic 1	Topic 2
Australia: NHMRC	✓	✓
China: NSFC	✓	✓
Indonesia: BRIN	✓	✓
Japan: AMED	✓	x

Member Organization	Topic 1	Topic 2
Philippines: DOST-PCHRD	x	✓
Singapore: A*STAR	x	✓
USA: NIAID *(Revised)*	✓	x

Next Steps:

1) The first draft call text was circulated in early August, with responses received from four Member Organizations.

2) A second draft will be distributed following ABM 2025.

3) NHMRC plans to finalize the call text by mid-October.

4) Additional Member Organizations may still join the Health Research call.

Field of Cooperation: Agriculture

Moderator: Ms. Sasti Orisa, BRIN, Indonesia

Rapporteur: Sarmini, BRIN, Indonesia

Reporter: Ms. Nurul Faiza, BRIN, Indonesia

Participants: 1. Australia: NHMRC

2. Cambodia: MISTI

3. China: NSFC

4. Indonesia: BRIN

5. Japan: JST

6. Malaysia: MOSTI-ASM

7. Philippines: DOST-PCAARRD *(revised)*

Objective: To finalize call topics, agree on the main contents of the call guidelines in Agriculture, and establish a timeline for guideline finalization.

Agreed Call Topics:

1) Call Topic 1: Post-Harvest and Agro-Industrial Innovation

2) Call Topic 2: Smart and Climate-Resilient Farming

3) Call Topic 3: One Health Approach & Antimicrobial Resistance in Agriculture

On-Hold Topic:

1) Bioactive Compounds & Functional Ingredients (AG03)

Participating Member Organizations:

Member Organization	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3
Australia: NHMRC	x	x	✓
Cambodia: MISTI	x	x	✓
China: NSFC	✓	✓	✓
Indonesia: BRIN	✓	✓	x
Japan: JST	✓	✓	x
Malaysia: MOSTI-ASM	✓	✓	x
Philippines: DOST-PCAARRD	x	✓	x

Field of Cooperation:	Alternative Energy
Moderator:	Dr. Sonthaya Chaiarwut, PMU-B, Thailand
Rapporteur:	Dr. Smith Leknettip, PMU-B, Thailand
Reporter:	Dr. Rattapoom Tuchinda, PMU-B, Thailand
Participants: *(Revised)*	1. Indonesia: BRIN
	2. Philippines: DOST-PCIEERD
	3. Singapore: A*STAR
	4. Thailand: PMU-B
Objective:	To refine and finalize the Alternative Energy Call by presenting proposed topics, gathering MO input, and incorporating lessons from past calls to strengthen guidelines and partnerships.

Agreed Call Topics:

1) Call Topic 1: Sustainable and Renewable Fuels

   a. **Net-Zero Emission Policy**:

      1. Policy Instruments & Cooperation – Regional frameworks to support the Net Zero transition

      2. Biofuels Policy – Development of coordinated regional strategies for biofuels

      3. Renewable Energy & Net Zero Policy – Regional approaches to accelerate renewable deployment for net-zero emissions

      4. Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF) Policy – ASEAN-level policy support for SAF development and adoption

      5. Hydrogen Standards & Trade – Regional-wide safety standards, certification, and policy harmonization for hydrogen deployment and trade.

   b. **Sustainable Aviation & Marine Fuels**:

      1. SAF from Tropical Feedstocks – Develop and test pathways for certification and industry adoption

      2. Process Optimization – Advance thermochemical, biochemical, and catalytic methods for drop-in fuels

      3. HEFA Scale-Up – Pilot and expand hydro processed esters and fatty acids (HEFA) at national level

      4. Marine Fuels – Demonstrate and scale up carbon-neutral marine fuel production.

      5. Storage & Transport – Develop systems for SAF storage, distribution, and fuel integration

      6. Refinery Retrofit – Adapt existing refineries and biorefineries for SAF production.

2) Call Topic 2: Hydrogen and Its Derivatives

- Hydrogen from Biobased Sources – Production from biomass, biogas, and marine resources tailored to tropical conditions.

- Electrolysis with Advanced Catalysts – Hydrogen generation using photocatalytic and other innovative catalytic materials.

- Next-Generation Electrolyzers – Development of PEM, AEM, and SOEC systems with reduced reliance on critical raw materials.

- Hydrogen Carriers – Conversion into ammonia, methanol, and other value-added fuels for storage and transport.

3) Call Topic 3: Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)

- Technology & Feasibility – Reactor technology assessment; Readiness of country and infrastructure for building nuclear power plant; Feasibility studies SMR for decentralized system; Application and Demonstration for SMR

- Safety & Waste Management – Next generation nuclear safety research (GenIV, thorium fuel cycle); Longterm radioactive waste management systems; Emergency Planning & Response

Participating Member Organizations:

Member Organization	Topic 1a	Topic 1b	Topic 2	Topic 3
China: NSFC	✓	✓	x	✓
Indonesia: BRIN	✓	✓	x	✓
Philippines: DOST-PCIEERD	✓	✓	✓	✓
Singapore: A*STAR	x	x	x	✓
Thailand: PMU-B	✓	x	✓	✓

Discussion Agenda of Session 2

Discussion Agenda 2: Proposed Timeline

NSFC (China)

- Expressed concern regarding the 14th Call timeline, noting the need for the announcement before mid-October due to their financial year closing in mid-November. They explained that internal approval is conducted for the entire call at once, requiring confirmation of all projects, and requested a fixed date for the ad hoc meeting.

DOST (Philippines)

- Suggested separating the announcement of the call from the notification of successful PIs to allow MOs to proceed with internal processes earlier but concluded that there should be only a single official announcement from e-ASIA Secretariat to maintain clarity and avoid confusion. Additionally, given that the 14th and 15th Calls will proceed on separate tracks, with call development planned for the 15th Call and ad hoc meeting and announcement for the 14th Call, it is important to manage the timelines distinctly to avoid overlapping and ensure smooth coordination for both processes.

AMED (Japan) *(Revised)*

- Noted the need for sufficient preparation time between proposal selection and official announcements. They recalled that letters had previously been sent to both successful and unsuccessful PIs but recommended limiting communication to successful applicants to reduce the Secretariat's workload.

NIAID (USA)

- Proposed sending letters in two rounds — prioritizing successful applicants first to enable funding processes, followed by feedback to unsuccessful applicants. They further suggested setting a fixed deadline for the eligibility check, separate from the national review timeline, to prevent delays in eligibility checks from impacting the timely completion of national review. *(Revised)*

e-ASIA Secretariat

- Emphasized that the timeline of selected projects depends on internal approval processes of each MO. They proposed convening the ad hoc meeting in early October, after receiving responses from Lead PIs on on-hold proposals by the end of September. This would allow MOs to begin internal approvals ahead of the announcement. The Secretariat confirmed efforts to finalize decisions in the first half of October to support timely internal approval across MOs, also confirmed it would consider the feasibility of suggestions proposed by the MOs.

Discussion Agenda 3: 15th Call Development Workshop and Technical Call Text Development

NSFC (China)

- Affirmed that, with the Environment Call cancelled, they would allocate their budget to the Alternative Energy Call and expressed interest in Call Topic 1 (AE01) and Call Topic 3 (AE03), with a letter of interest to follow.

DOST (Philippines)

- Highlighted limited interest in Call Topic 2: Hydrogen and derivatives (AE02) with only two MOs engaged and encouraged broader participation. They also raised concern over the recurring low engagement of some MOs and proposed strategies such as joint seminars, workshops, and outreach to involve less active members. They stressed the importance of engaging early-career researchers to strengthen diversity and innovation and clarified the need to standardize definitions of in-kind contributions so MOs without fresh funds can still participate. They further suggested holding an annual reporting or engagement event to update and encourage all MOs.

MEXT (Japan)

- Raised concerns regarding the Call Topic 3: Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), noting restrictions in Japan on nuclear-related research due to past experience.

They requested the Secretariat to consult with responsible divisions in Japan before proceeding, given JST's central role in the program.

BRIN (Indonesia)

2) Asked whether the topic in Bioactive Compounds & Functional Ingredients (AG03) could remain open until mid-November for additional LOIs or if a decision must be taken during the current meeting.

NIAID (USA)

- Appreciated NHMRC's leadership in convening early call development workshops, which enabled better topic refinement. They recommended holding such discussions earlier in the process and suggested clarifying participation modalities (e.g., in-kind or re-budgeting options) to reduce barriers for MOs with limited new funding.

NHMRC (Australia)

4) Confirmed interest in Call Topic 3: One Health Approach & Antimicrobial Resistance in Agriculture (AG04) with Cambodia and China but noted that Cambodia's focus is limited to AMR policy development in livestock across CLV countries. NHMRC can only fund research related to human health and requires a broader scope than a focus on policy for CLV countries. If the scope cannot be broadened, involvement will not be possible, potentially reducing participation to two MOs. *(Revised)*

MISTI (Cambodia)

- Reported ongoing discussions with the Ministry of Health on revising their proposed project under the One Health theme, focusing more on human health, with confirmation to be provided by email.

e-ASIA Secretariat

- Clarified that while today's voting session would determine call topics, AG03 could remain open until the mid-November LOI deadline to allow additional MO

participation. They also acknowledged the concerns raised regarding participation strategies, in-kind contribution standards, and the timing of call development workshops, and noted these points for follow-up.

Conclusion of Session 2

The session concluded with agreement that the Secretariat will schedule the ad hoc meeting in early October to finalize the on-hold proposals of the 14th Call and ensure that Member Organizations can proceed with their internal approval processes in a timely manner. The Secretariat confirmed it will consider the suggestions raised by the Member Organizations regarding the announcement and notification process, while also ensuring clear separation between the 14th and 15th Calls. Member Organizations reaffirmed their commitments to the agreed call topics in Health Research, Agriculture, and Alternative Energy, with further clarification requested on participation conditions, in-kind contributions, and national considerations. Emphasis was also placed on encouraging wider engagement of additional Member Organizations to strengthen the diversity and impact of future calls.

The session was concluded at 10:30 (ICT, UTC+7)

Session 3: Eligibility of 14th Joint Call Applications and Enhancements

Time Period: 10:30–12:15

Session Moderator: Ms. Reiko Yuguchi, e-ASIA JRP Secretariat

Rapporteur: e-ASIA JRP Secretariat

Reporting Agenda:

1) Agenda 1: Overview of Eligibility Check Timeline and Outcomes

2) Agenda 2: Common Issues Related to Application Ineligibility

3) Agenda 3: Refining the Call Guidelines and Common Application Form

Reporting Summary of Session 3

The session was opened by Ms. Yuguchi, who outlined the rationale for discussion:

1) Increase in application volume for the 14th Call

2) Rise in eligibility issues and administrative burden

3) Discussion on process improvement for the 15th Call

1. Agenda 1: Overview of Eligibility Check Timeline and Outcomes

1.1. Eligibility Check Timeline and Outcomes:

1.1.1 The eligibility check was conducted from 11–25 April 2025, but extension requests delayed the start of the national review by about one month.

1.1.2 Out of 260 proposals, 69.2% were eligible: Health (127 submissions, 66.1% eligibility), Alternative Energy (61 submissions, 77%), and Disaster Risk Reduction (72 submissions, 68%).

2. Agenda 2: Common Issues Related to Application Ineligibility

2.1 Common Ineligibility Reasons and Submission Issues:

2.1.1   Frequent ineligibility reasons included:

- Non-compliance with submission requirements.

- Misalignment with consortium composition requirements.

- Non-adherence to applicant qualification criteria.

- Budget requests exceeding the maximum allowable amount.

2.1.2   Submission issues observed by the Secretariat included:

- Resubmission of application forms

- Unauthorized modifications of forms

- Use of outdated or non-standard forms

- Submissions by National PIs directly to the Secretariat

- Proposals sent to incorrect email addresses

- Duplicate submissions

3. Agenda 3: Refining the Call Guidelines and Common Application Form

3.1   Refinement of the Call Guidelines:

3.1.1   Clarification of Roles and Responsibilities – Refining descriptions of Lead PI duties and adding a statement to highlight National PI responsibilities.

3.1.2   Inclusion of General Eligibility Criteria – Explicitly outlining consortium composition, PI eligibility compliance, and submission format requirements.

3.1.3   Template and Guideline Consistency – Clarifying template use for submissions and ensuring that the English version of the Call Guideline fully aligns with all national announcements. Any additional national requirements must be consistently reflected across both English and local-language versions to avoid confusion for Lead PIs.

3.2   Refinement of the Common Application Form:

    3.2.1   Standardized Formatting Requirements – Establishing consistent rules on font, size, margins, and spacing (proposed by NIAID).

    3.2.2   Page Limit and Word Count Guidance – Clear rules to prevent inconsistencies (proposed by NIAID, PMU-B, and the Secretariat).

    3.2.3   Redesign of Application Forms – Simplification of layout, clearer separation of sections, refined instructions, removal of unnecessary boxes, and a shift to a single unified Common Application Form comprising nine sections (proposed by NHMRC).

Discussion Agenda of Session 3

Discussion Agenda 1: Overview of Eligibility Check Timeline and Outcomes

ASM (Malaysia)

- Noted that the two-week eligibility check period was too short, proposing a minimum of one month to allow thorough screening. With approximately 85 proposals received, ASM emphasized that many were rejected due to lack of collaboration or insufficient Technology Readiness Level (TRL).

NSFC (China)

- Shared their national practice of completing eligibility checks within 15 days, including an appeal window. They suggested that if submission volumes become too large, narrowing the focus areas could help manage the workload.

NHMRC (Australia)

- Noted that the higher ineligibility rate in e-ASIA (up to one-third) compared to national schemes (1–2%) suggests opportunities to improve program design. They encouraged clearer guidance and streamlined administrative processes to better support applicants.

AMED (Japan)

- Reported that many proposals exceeded page/word limits, but such cases were not automatically ruled ineligible, reflecting flexibility in interpretation.

Discussion Agenda 2: Common Issues Related to Application Ineligibility

NIAID (USA)

- Suggested to explicitly state in the Call Guidelines that alterations to the application form would result in rejection. They also called for minimum formatting standards (e.g., page limits, font size) and measures to address repetitive applicants by requiring disclosure of how new proposals differ from previously funded work. They further suggested exploring remediation for correctable issues (e.g., over-budget submissions).

NHMRC (Australia)

- Supported distinguishing between eligibility rules and compliance issues, noting that matters such as formatting or budgets could be left for reviewers or MOs to resolve rather than automatically disqualifying applications.

DOST-PCIEERD (Philippines)

- Stressed the importance of engaging applicants early through national call conferences to avoid first-time applicants missing requirements. They highlighted that some eligibility items are non-negotiable (e.g., proponent affiliation), while others might allow remediation.

JST (Japan)

- Advocated for a simpler eligibility check limited to essential items, leaving technical assessments to expert reviewers.

NSFC (China)

- Identified common problems such as mismatched PI information across systems, suggesting stronger emphasis on consistency.

ASM (Malaysia)

- Acknowledged communication issues in their first-time participation, where national PIs misunderstood submission procedures. They also raised concerns about making lead PI eligibility mandatory, which could disadvantage younger researchers.

Discussion Agenda 3: Refining the Call Guidelines and Common Application Form

NIAID (USA)

- Proposed introducing FAQs alongside the Call Guidelines to address recurring applicant questions and reduce ineligibility. They also emphasized clarifying how many proposals an MO can support versus fund, as well as how ABC scoring is applied, since inconsistent practices affect outcomes.

NHMRC (Australia)

- Supported harmonization of practices, especially around eligibility decisions, peer review transparency, and communication of scoring. They suggested scheduling workshops during the application period to strengthen applicants' understanding of requirements. They also raised the idea of a centralized submission system beyond email.

DOST (Philippines)

- Proposed broader harmonization of evaluation criteria across MOs to reduce discrepancies, as well as revisiting the balance between basic and applied research (including technology transfer potential of submitted proposals). They suggested updating impact assessments to include recently completed projects and clarifying definitions of in-kind contributions. *(Revised)*

NSFC (China)

- Supported orientation sessions for applicants to improve understanding and endorsed the idea of a coordinated online system in the future.

e-ASIA Secretariat

- Agreed that common issues could be incorporated into an improved checklist and stressed that formatting requirements should serve reviewers but not automatically disqualify applicants. The Secretariat will circulate revised Call Guidelines and the Common Application Form for the 15th Call and welcome MOs' further input. They also noted the need for continued dialogue on eligibility checks, evaluation harmonization, and potential refinements for future calls.

Conclusion of Session 3

The session provided a comprehensive review of the eligibility check process and eligibility outcomes of the 14th Call for Proposals, highlighting key lessons learned and challenges. The participants shared national practices, experiences, and observations, which underscored the need for greater clarity, harmonization, and communication to reduce ineligibility and administrative burden.

Consensus emerged on several points: eligibility checks should focus on essential requirements while leaving technical and compliance issues to reviewers or Member Organizations; clear guidance and early engagement with applicants can prevent common errors; and harmonized procedures, including standardized formatting, FAQs, and possible workshops, will support smoother future calls.

The e-ASIA Secretariat will circulate the revised Call Guidelines and Common Application Form for the 15th Call, incorporating the suggestions and best practices shared by Member Organizations. Continued dialogue on eligibility checks, evaluation

harmonization, and refinement of processes will be essential to improve efficiency, ensure fairness, and maintain the quality of submitted proposals in future calls.

The session was concluded at 12:15 (ICT, UTC+7)

Session 4: Progress Report on Impact Assessment

Time Period: 13:30–14:15 (ICT, UTC+7)

Session Moderator: Mr. Hideyuki Asano, e-ASIA JRP Secretariat

Rapporteur: e-ASIA JRP Secretariat

Reporting Agenda:

1) Agenda 1: Overview of Impact Assessment Process

2) Agenda 2: Key Survey Results

3) Agenda 3: Lessons Learned and Recommendations from Respondents

4) Agenda 4: Challenges and Future Directions

Reporting Summary of Session 4

1. Agenda 1: Overview of Impact Assessment Process

The session opened with an overview of the impact assessment process presented by Mr. Asano. He traced the journey starting in September 2023, when the Board decided to conduct an Impact Assessment and initiated discussions on its framework.

1.1   Timeline of the impact assessment:

1.1.1   October 2023 – March 2024: The Impact Assessment Working Group was formed, involving DOST-PCIEERD, NIAID, JST, and PMU-B, and held four meetings to design the survey approach.

1.1.2   October 2024 – February 2025: The Working Group prepared the questionnaire.

1.1.3   March 2025: The questionnaire was issued to 11 MOs and 64 researchers.

1.1.4   May and July 2025: DOST-PCIEERD and the Secretariat met twice to discuss the analysis of responses.

1.1.5   July 2025: Responses were received from 5 MOs (DOST-PCIEERD, DOST-PCHRD, NIAID, NSTDA, JST) and 9 researchers.

1.2   Respondence of the impact assessment survey:

1.2.1   In total, 11 MOs and 64 researchers were targeted (covering 19 completed projects from the 1st Call in 2012 to the 5th Call in 2016). Actual responses included 5 MOs and 9 researchers: 3 endorsed by DOST-PCIEERD, 2 by NIAID, and 4 by JST.

2. Agenda 2: Key Survey Results

2.1   Overview of questionnaire – Member Organizations

2.1.1   The questionnaire for MOs consisted of 10 questions, organized into 3 sections and 8 subsections, each rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Not at all to 5 = Outstanding).

- **Section I. Involvement**
  - Alignment of research priorities
  - Benefits and changes experienced
  - Effectiveness of collaborative environment, stakeholder engagement, and influence on collaboration
- **Section II. Network and Collaboration**
  - Expansion of networks and international reputation
  - Recognition of contributions to e-ASIA JRP
  - Likelihood of future engagement
- **Section III. Sustainability and Capacity Building**
  - Knowledge exchange and capacity building

         o Satisfaction with funding mechanisms and resource allocation

2.2   Key Survey Results – Member Organizations:

2.2.1 The overall mean score was 3.20, suggesting that while the program is seen as relevant, its impact is not yet fully perceived as strong.

2.2.2 *Benefits* under involvement scored 3.10, showing limited tangible returns felt by members.

2.2.3 *Recognition* scored lowest at 3.0, indicating a need to strengthen visibility and acknowledgment of contributions.

2.3   Overview of questionnaire – Researchers:

2.3.1 The questionnaire for researchers included 9 questions across 4 sections, also rated on the 5-point scale:

- **Section I: Research Activities**: progression, network expansion, benefits gained
- **Section II: Collaboration with Society**: stakeholder connections, societal impact
- **Section III: Sustainability**: ability to secure new funding and sustain projects
- **Section IV: Human Resource Development**: training and development opportunities

2.4   Key Survey Results – Researchers:

2.4.1 Average scores for research progress, network expansion, and benefits ranged from 3.78 to 3.89 (overall mean: 3.81), reflecting generally positive experiences.

2.4.2 Human Resource Development scored lower (2.78), suggesting the need for more structured and long-term capacity-building initiatives.

2.4.3   Mixed responses indicated progress in human resource development, but varying levels of consistency and depth.

3. Agenda 3: Lessons Learned and Recommendations from Respondents

3.1   Stronger benefits are reported when e-ASIA focus areas align closely with organizational priorities.

3.2   Funding stability is appreciated, but greater emphasis is needed on capacity building.

3.3   Collaboration with local communities and societal stakeholders remains limited, pointing to the need for broader outreach beyond academia.

4. Agenda 4: Challenges and Future Directions

4.1   Implications and Suggestions for e-ASIA JRP:

4.1.1   Introduce KPIs to better track tangible impacts (e.g., joint projects funded, policies influenced, initiatives launched).

4.1.2   Enhance recognition and visibility through media exposure, awards, and publication highlights.

4.1.3   Strengthen capacity building with mentorship and peer support, addressing gaps highlighted in human resource development.

4.1.4   Foster community engagement by encouraging projects with participatory approaches.

4.2   Future Impact Assessment:

4.2.1   To improve response rates, stronger commitments from Member Organizations are essential for wider dissemination.

4.2.2   Continued surveys will help track long-term outcomes and impacts, pending agreement and support from Member Organizations.

Discussion Agenda of Session 4

Discussion Agenda 1: Overview of Impact Assessment Process

DOST (Philippines)

- Observed that only five MOs and nine researchers responded to the survey, making the dataset too limited to generalize. They emphasized that using projects only up to 2016 weakened the relevance, as respondents may not recall details from almost a decade ago. They proposed more recent coverage (e.g., projects completed from 2024 backward) and suggested distributing questionnaires at ABM events to ensure better response rates. *(Revised)*

NHMRC (Australia)

- Clarified that while they could not lead the assessment last year due to capacity limits, they were willing to circulate questionnaires through their networks. They highlighted that impact should also capture the benefits of funders' collaboration, priority setting, and shared learning in e-ASIA — an intangible yet significant outcome often overlooked.

MISTI (Cambodia)

- Raised a methodological query on how comparison groups could be established in non-experimental impact assessment designs, noting that typical evaluations involve such control groups.

Discussion Agenda 2: Key Survey Results

DOST (Philippines)

- Noted that limited responses and highly varied survey ratings (ranging from very low to very high) make results inconclusive. They stressed that some MOs and researchers may value output differently, underscoring the need to reconcile

divergent views for collective benefit. They also highlighted difficulties in tracking researchers over time, as they often move institutions, and recommended collecting impact data immediately upon project completion.

AMED (Japan)

- Highlighted that strong relationships built under e-ASIA have the potential to evolve into other bilateral collaborations beyond the program. They stressed that the value of survey results should not only be seen in current e-ASIA achievements, but also in the new opportunities the platform indirectly enables.

NIAID (USA)

- Emphasized that MOs may define "success" differently, making it difficult to apply common metrics. They suggested acknowledging diverse expectations while still presenting collective outcomes, with examples of success cases rather than purely numeric measures. NIAID further agreed on the importance of communicating results to communities, while recognizing that methods will vary depending on project type and stage in the research cycle.

JST (Japan)

- Expressed concerns that conclusions such as "deepen community engagement" may not apply across all project types, since not all research programs are designed for policy or community-level impact. They noted that lower survey scores on community engagement should not automatically be interpreted as a weakness. *(Revised)*

e-ASIA Secretariat

- Clarified that the implications presented were preliminary insights, not definitive conclusions. They stressed the importance of respecting MOs' differing intentions for participating in e-ASIA, while noting that for some, deeper community engagement remains a meaningful objective. They also suggested

that modifying the final project report format could allow collection of basic impact data without requiring separate follow-up surveys.

Discussion Agenda 4: Challenges and Future Directions

DOST (Philippines)

- Recommended including technology transfer as an additional proposal evaluation criterion, ensuring projects also benefit industries and enterprises beyond communities. They highlighted that impact should not be assessed only after five years, since many projects show outcomes within one year of completion. DOST also distinguished between assessing the e-ASIA platform itself (effectiveness of collaboration, cross-border challenges, MO growth) and the projects (contributions to objectives and regional development). They urged e-ASIA to set clearer indicators, targets, and a roadmap (e.g., where the program should be in five years).

e-ASIA Secretariat

- Suggested exploring more practical approaches to ensure sustained data collection, such as integrating impact-related questions into mandatory project final reports. They also encouraged MOs to continue exchanging perspectives on how best to assess e-ASIA's long-term contributions at both the program and project levels.

Conclusion of Session 4

The session highlighted both the value and the complexity of assessing the impact of e-ASIA JRP. Member Organizations agreed that while initial survey results provide useful insights, the limited number of respondents makes it difficult to generalize outcomes. Several MOs stressed the need for broader participation, more recent project coverage, and more practical approaches to data collection — such as integrating impact questions into final project reports or distributing surveys during meetings.

Discussions emphasized that e-ASIA's impact should be understood on two levels: (1) the platform itself, in terms of strengthening collaboration among funding agencies, setting regional priorities, and enabling bilateral spin-off collaborations; and (2) the projects, in terms of contributions to communities, industries, and regional development. While MOs recognized the importance of community engagement and communication of research results, they also acknowledged that not all projects are designed for this purpose and that measures of success will differ across disciplines and agencies.

The session concluded with consensus on the need for clearer objectives, realistic indicators, and a forward-looking roadmap for e-ASIA. MOs expressed readiness to continue refining the impact assessment framework and to share lessons learned, ensuring that future evaluations capture both tangible and intangible benefits of the program.

The session was concluded at 14:15 (ICT, UTC+7)

Session 5: Reflection on International Collaborative Research Networking Workshop

Time Period: 14:15–15:00 (ICT, UTC+7)

Session Moderator: Mr. Hideyuki Asano, e-ASIA JRP Secretariat

Rapporteur: MISTI, Cambodia

Reporting Agenda:

1) Agenda 1: Workshop Overview
2) Agenda 2: Influence of the Workshop on the 14th Call for Proposals and Lesson Learned
3) Agenda 3: Challenges and Future Directions

Reporting Summary of Session 5

- The reflections highlighted mixed outcomes from the International Collaborative Research Networking Workshop, noting strong participation but a limited increase in the number of applications. Suggestions for future workshops included aligning them with open call periods, improving clarity on eligibility requirements, and leveraging technology to facilitate collaboration. Additional proposals included organizing strategy workshops for Member Organizations, facilitating early partner matching, providing recorded explanations of eligibility criteria online to ensure broader accessibility, and exploring the use of AI in the review process

Reflection from MOs *(Revised)*

A. Suggestions Related to Applicant Workshops and Researcher Engagement

- MOs agreed to hold the 15th Call Workshop during the last week of January or first week of February. The workshop will be recorded and shared more widely to accommodate for investigators across time zones.

- MOs agreed that the 15th Call Workshop should be focused on eligibility requirements. Additionally, MOs noted that we can explore other modalities to make collaboration linkages between investigators.

- NIAID and NHMRC volunteered to participate in the 15th Call Workshop working group. The e-ASIA Secretariat confirmed they will reach out to all MOs to solicit additional volunteers.

B. Programmatic and Structural Improvements

- Encourage more Member Organizations to participate in the call to strengthen the collaborative network.

- Enhance dissemination efforts and continue promoting collaborative research with relevant stakeholders. The call for proposals should be made available in both local languages and English to reach a wider audience.

- Refine the participation process and establish clear guidelines for international partners regarding in-kind contributions.

- Suggest defining conditions for the withdrawal of membership status for countries that consistently fail to participate in meetings or collaborate in e-ASIA program activities.

- Suggest organizing workshops specifically for Member Organizations to strategize and better understand each other's eligibility requirements and peer review processes, facilitating smoother collaboration.

The session was concluded at 15:00 (ICT, UTC+7).

Voting Session

Time Period: 15:15–15:50 (ICT, UTC+7)

Session Moderator: Dr. Socheat Keo, MISTI

Rapporteur: MISTI, Cambodia

Reporting Agenda:

1) Agenda 1: Approval of the Annual Activity Report
2) Agenda 2: Approval of amendments to the Program Statutes
3) Agenda 3.1: Approval of fields of cooperation, call topics, main MOs
4) Agenda 3.2: Approval of timeline for the launch of the 15th Call for Proposals
5) Agenda 4.1: Approval of selected projects under the 14th Joint Call for Proposals
6) Agenda 4.2: Approval of on-hold projects under the 14th Joint Call for Proposals

Reporting Summary of Voting Session

The Board Members and Delegates unanimously voted to the following agenda items:

1) Agenda 1: Approval of the Annual Activity Report

   B. *Approved with minor amendment (no additional ad hoc meeting)*

2) Agenda 2: Approval of amendments to the Program Statutes

   A. *Approved without amendment.*

3) Agenda 3.1: Approval of fields of cooperation, call topics, main MOs

   B. *Approved with minor amendment (no additional ad hoc meeting)*

4) Agenda 3.2: Approval of timeline for the launch of the 15th Call for Proposals

   B. *Approved with minor amendment (no additional ad hoc meeting)*

5) Agenda 4.1: Approval of selected projects under the 14th Joint Call for Proposals

   A. *Approved without amendment.*

6) Agenda 4.2: Approval of on-hold projects under the 14th Joint Call for Proposals

   C. *Continue to discuss in the details and approve at the ad hoc meeting*

1. Amendments Based on Voting Session

1.1 The Secretariat will amend the following points that received a (B) vote during the voting session. The final amendments will be communicated to all MOs via email in due course:

- Agenda 1: 13th Annual Activity Report
- Agenda 3.1: Fields of cooperation, call topics, and main MOs
- Agenda 3.2: Proposed timeline for the launch of the 15th Call for Proposals

2. Selected and On-hold Proposals of the 14th Call for Proposals

2.1 Health Research: 6 Selected Proposals

- HE1406 – Japan / Indonesia / USA
- HE1436 – Australian / Philippines / USA
- HE1438 – China / Singapore / Australia
- HE1494 – Thailand / Japan / Australia
- HE1496 – Australian / Malaysia / Indonesia
- HE14112 – Australia / Singapore / Thailand / Indonesia / Malaysia

2.2 Alternative Energy: 4 Selected Proposals

- AE1403 – China / Singapore / Indonesia

- AE1408 – Thailand / China / Japan / Singapore

- AE1415 – China / Thailand / Singapore

- AE1458 – Japan / China / Singapore / Indonesia

2.3 Disaster Risk Reduction and Management: 4 Selected Proposals

- DM1408 – China / Japan / Indonesia

- DM1412 *(Revised)* – Japan / Philippines / Indonesia

- DM1414 – China / Malaysia / Singapore

- DM1463 – Japan / China / Indonesia / Singapore

2.4 On-hold candidate proposals: 2 proposals (HE14106 and AE1413) are currently pending confirmation on the project feasibility by the Lead PIs, and 1 proposal (HE1472) pending confirmation on the endorsement from DOST-PCHRD by the end of September. *(Revised)*

- HE14106 – Australia / Indonesia / ~~Japan~~ / USA / Singapore

- AE1413 – China / Indonesia / Japan / ~~Philippines~~

- HE1472 – Australia / USA / <u>Philippines</u>

3. 43rd Ad Hoc Board Meeting (via email)

3.1 This meeting will address Agenda 4.2: On-hold Projects under the 14th Joint Call for Proposals. It will be conducted via email by October 6, following two weeks during which the concerned Lead PIs will be allowed to confirm the feasibility of their proposals.

4. Revision of Call Guidelines and Common Application Forms

4.1 The Call Guidelines and Common Application Form, as discussed in Session 3, will be revised accordingly and shared with the Main MOs for further use and feedback, if any.

5. Promotion of Participation and Topic Confirmation

5.1 The Secretariat will work on promoting the participation of other Member Organizations (MOs) in AG03 in collaboration with the MMO and participating MOs.

5.2 They will also follow up on the confirmation from MEXT, Japan, regarding their position on the topic AE03: Small Modular Reactors (SMRs).

The session was concluded at 15:50 (ICT, UTC+7).

Closing Session

Time Period: 15:50–16:30 (ICT, UTC+7)
Session Moderator: Ms. Reiko Yuguchi, e-ASIA JRP Secretariat
Rapporteur: MISTI, Cambodia

Closing Remark

- On behalf of MISTI and Cambodia, Dr. Socheat Keo expressed his appreciation to delegates for their contributions, recognition of progress in reviewing achievements and preparing the next call for proposals, the 14th Joint Research Program, ABM 2025 and thanks to the Secretariat and technical teams for their support.

Next Hosting for ABM 2026

- Announce the host of the next ABM by Ms. Nurul Faiza (BRIN), the event will be held in Indonesia.

The session was concluded at 16:30 (ICT, UTC+7).

Annex: Participant List in the ABM 2025

1. Dr. Nicholas Johnson   *NHMRC, Australia*
2. Ms. Kirilly Agnew   *NHMRC, Australia*
3. Ms. Jane Lofts   *NHMRC, Australia*
4. Ms. Rachael Cooper   *NHMRC, Australia*
5. Dr. Socheat Keo   *MISTI, Cambodia*
6. Ms. Sdok Soksreymeng   *MISTI, Cambodia*
7. Dr. Chinda Chhe   *MISTI, Cambodia*
8. Ms. ZHANG Yiwei   *NSFC, China*
9. Prof. Agus Haryono   *BRIN, Indonesia*
10. Dr. Raden Arthur Ario Lelono   *BRIN, Indonesia*
11. Ms. Nurul Faiza   *BRIN, Indonesia*
12. Mr. Shinsuke Okada   *MEXT, Japan*
13. Ms. Sayaka Yanai   *MEXT, Japan*
14. Ms. Junko Shiraishi   *JST, Japan*
15. Ms. Nahoko Kameda Ando   *JST, Japan*
16. Ms. Wakana Yamanaka   *JST, Japan*
17. Mr. Shinji Otsuka   *JST, Japan*
18. Ms. Satoko Takei   *JST, Japan*
19. Mr. Yukihiro Hisanaga   *AMED, Japan*
20. Dr. Kyosuke Haze   *AMED, Japan*
21. Mr. Takashi Hotta   *AMED, Japan*
22. Ms. Chan Foh Ching   *MOSTI, Malaysia*
23. Ms. Ungku Aida Farzana Binti Ungku Azly *MOSTI, Malaysia*
24. Ms. Kausaalya Nagaraja   *ASM, Malaysia*
25. Dr. Cho Cho Lwin   *MOST, Myanmar*
26. Dr. Leah J. Buendia   *DOST, The Philippines*
27. Ms. Andrea M. Velasquez-Agapito   *DOST, The Philippines*
28. Dr. Juanito T. Batalon   *DOST-PCAARRD, The Philippines*
29. Mr. Paul Ernest N. de Leon   *DOST-PCHRD, The Philippines*

30. Dr. Enrico C. Paringit   *DOST-PCIEERD, The Philippines*
31. Ms. Grace F. Estillore   *DOST-PCIEERD, The Philippines*
32. Ms. Hannah Marie T. Mejia   *DOST-PCIEERD, The Philippines*
33. Ms. Dania Laborte   *DOST-PCIEERD, The Philippines*
34. Ms. Patricia Nicole Calica   *DOST-PCIEERD, The Philippines*
35. Ms. Diana Adnan   *A*STAR, Singapore*
36. Ms. Kwansiri Chonyuth   *NRCT, Thailand*
37. Ms. Chontida Tangnara   *NRCT, Thailand*
38. Ms. Supapich Nunart   *NRCT, Thailand*
39. Dr. Uracha Ruktanonchai   *NSTDA, Thailand*
40. Ms. Mulika Kulsiripruck   *NSTDA, Thailand*
41. Dr. Sonthaya Chaiarwut   *PMU-B, Thailand*
42. Mr. Smith Leknettip   *PMU-B, Thailand*
43. Ms. Joyelle Dominique   *NIAID, United States of America*
44. Ms. Lucy Ruderman   *NIAID, United States of America*
45. Ms. La Thi My Anh   *MOST, Vietnam*
46. Ms. Reiko Yuguchi   *e-ASIA JRP Secretariat*
47. Mr. Hideyuki Asano   *e-ASIA JRP Secretariat*
48. Ms. Kullanan Sukwanchai   *e-ASIA JRP Secretariat*