

Adaptive development is a newly emerging field that attempts to link the concepts of sustainable development, climate change adaptation and risk governance into one paradigm. It is a field that could be used for achieving a sustainable Asia-Pacific in the context of the emerging needs and challenges in the region. Adaptive development (AD) is a critical endeavour for the future well-being of people in the region and throughout the world. The presentations discussed the overall theme of AD, its relevance in policy making, as well as field-based approaches to research and learning for AD. The session aimed to identify further means for mobilising academic and research communities in pragmatic knowledge production for addressing these emerging issues

Dr. Kazuo Yamamoto, Vice President of AIT, provided the keynote speech addressing the importance of networking as well as the need for a deepening knowledge accompanied by breakthrough technology at each networking node. Prof. Wanglin Yang of Keio University presented on transdisciplinarity in the context of student work on Project Based Learning (PBL) from different disciplines and how such an approach can be incorporated into the university curriculum. He explained the concept of AD and suggested that it is a pathway to the realisation of the goals of the 'Future Earth' initiative. He pointed out the existing gap between AD research and practice, and suggested that PBL is one effective way to bridge scientific knowledge and practice. Discussing whether adaptive policies are necessarily effective policies in climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction governance, Dr. Prabhakar S.V.R.K. of IGES presented research to identify adaptive policies and the effects of such responses. He addressed the questions of 1) how soon policies were introduced, 2) how frequently the policies underwent change, and 3) how effective the policies were in achieving their objectives. The study concluded that not all adaptive policies serve as effective policies, and that effective policies were dependent on a wider set of factors. A move from reactive governance towards predictive governance was proposed. Prof. P.K. Joshi of TERI University discussed pragmatic knowledge generation as a precursor to PBL and action research, and he examined different ways in which knowledge is generated. Important aspects in knowledge generation include capacity building in the form of thinking skills, critical thinking (using visual thinking), self-traits and thinking steps. He stressed the need for a knowledge revolution comprising the following elements: increased qualification of knowledge and development of new technologies; closer links with science-phase; increased importance on education and R&D; branding, marketing, distribution; and information management. Process, source, technology and innovation are seen as important requisites for a knowledge revolution.

Key messages of the session

- Currently there is little understanding on practical application of adaptive development. Understanding of AD can be enhanced through: 1) encouraging interaction between science and policy, and 2) use of "nodal" networking to deepen knowledge.
- There is currently a large gap between research and practice regarding AD, while the use of PBL could help bridge scientific knowledge with actual practice on the ground.
- Adaptive policies (related to NRM and DRM) do not necessarily mean effective policies. Policy effectiveness is dependent on several factors.
- Use of a pragmatic approach to achieving a knowledge revolution, i.e. a fundamental change in adding value by creating, assessing and using knowledge, would require process, source, technology and innovation.