



Conference: Innovation and sustainability Transitions in Asia

9-11 January 2011, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur

***** Call for Papers*****

Extended deadline for Abstracts: 15 October, 2010

Sustainable development is an objective for societies world-wide. But transitions to sustainable production and consumption have been studied primarily in rich, developed countries. However, the transformative changes now occurring in the rapidly urbanising and industrialising Asian economies and societies suggest a new focus. Transitions towards more sustainable development pathways are also fundamental challenges in Asia.

Achieving a profound decoupling of economic growth and development requires innovation based on industrial and technological capabilities, as well as deep-seated social, institutional and behavioural changes. Such large-scale, structural change we term 'system innovation'.

Previous research has shown that system innovation occurs through a quasi-evolutionary interaction between innovations emerging in niches and opportunities for change opening up in socio-technical regimes. System innovation involves the destabilisation of incumbent regimes and the emergence of new regimes involving novel configurations of technologies, actors, behaviours and rules. System innovation takes time, typically periods of decades.

An important new research challenge is to apply these concepts and ideas to rapidly developing cities, regions and countries. In these contexts, socio-technical regimes are already undergoing modernisation, but often following models from technologically-leading countries. The question is whether niche-based innovations generating sustainable alternatives in these contexts can change development pathways by linking to and transforming emergent socio-technical regimes in key sectors like energy, water, transportation, the built environment and food and agriculture. Part of the research challenge is to understand better how niches, regimes and development pathways are embedded within global knowledge, production and governance networks. These connect and shape innovation in niches and regimes, and provide the channels by which they grow and come to have a wider influence on development locally and globally.

This conference will focus on the nature and role of sustainable system innovation in transforming Asian development pathways in field such as energy, mobility, sanitation, nutrition and housing in urban and rural areas. The conference will take stock of what has been learned in the International Human Dimensions Programme Core Project on Industrial Transformation (IHDP-IT) over the last ten years, as well as move forward a new research agenda supported by the APN (Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research) and the Research Council of Norway. We welcome an international network of researchers, practitioners, policy makers and other actors who are interested in innovation and in exploring how it influences alternative, more sustainable development pathways.

Goals

The conference has two goals:

1. To synthesise and reflect on the current knowledge about innovation and sustainability transitions in Asia.
2. To set up new research agendas on innovation and sustainability in Asia.

To engage in a dialogue with policy, an interactive Policy Roundtable is planned on the theme of Biofuels, with participation of policy makers and practitioners involved in the field. The aim of this Roundtable is to explore the potential of biofuels in replacing fossil fuels in Asian energy systems. We observe numerous Asian experiments with biofuels (production and use) being developed with many different rationales (greenhouse gas emissions reductions, fuel security, and sustainable development) but the sustainability of biofuels is hotly contested. Under which conditions could biofuels become a major energy source in Asia while at the same time being socially, environmentally and economically sustainable?

Themes

Expanding on the two goals, papers on the following themes are invited:

- Theories of economic development and sustainability
- Innovation, growth and sustainability
- Learning, capability-building and system innovation
- Sectoral innovation studies and sustainability
- Transnational knowledge, technology and governance networks and sustainable innovation
- Governance, innovation and sustainability
- Consumption, behaviour and innovation
- Alternative technologies, livelihoods and lifestyles
- Case studies of sustainability experiments: successes and failures
- Development of sustainable technologies and niches
- Socio-technical regimes and their sustainability
- Expectation dynamics and participatory methods
- Diffusion and replication of experiments
- Innovation and environmental policy
- Politics, governance and power relationships
- Urbanization and urban management in Asian experience
- Climate change challenges, impacts, and policy

Papers are invited that address relevant aspects of the above two themes preferably addressing one or more of the topics identified above. We invite historical and empirical studies, as well as theoretical contributions and policy and practice-oriented cases. Papers that address the themes of the conference but cover experiences from geographical regions outside of Asia will also be considered.

Papers and sessions

Abstracts for papers and proposals for sessions (no more than 500 words) will be considered by the conference Scientific Committee. For sessions an overview and 3-4 abstracts should be proposed, and a session chair identified. Both, paper abstracts and session proposals should be submitted to it-apn2010@ivm.vu.nl by 15th October 2010.

The conference Scientific Committee will provide decisions on selected papers and sessions by the 30 October 2010.

Those invited to present will be asked to provide short papers by 15 December 2010. These will be made available on the conference website: <http://umconference.um.edu.my/it-apn2011>

prior to the meeting. Authors of accepted papers will be invited to make 15 minute presentations at the conference.

Participation costs

Conference registration fee is U\$150. This covers:

- Conference materials (program book and list of participants, CD, and stationery)
- Lunches and coffee breaks on 9, 10 and 11th January 2011
- Reception buffet on 9th January 2010
- Dinner on 10th January 2010

Participants will be asked to pay their own travel expenses and hotel costs at the conference venue (a block booking of rooms will be made by the organisers at preferential rates).

However, financial assistance for travel and subsistence is available for participants from the Asian region whose papers are accepted for presentation. Guidelines on how to apply will be posted on the conference website after evaluation and selection of abstracts.

Practicalities

All enquiries about the conference should be directed to the conference email:

it-apn2010@ivm.vu.nl. Information about registration, accommodation, venue etc will be posted at the conference website.

Organisation

The conference is organised under the auspices of the IHDP's Industrial Transformation project; APN – Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research; University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur; The Research Council of Norway; Eindhoven University of Technology, The Netherlands and the Jadavpur University, India.

Scientific Committee

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