



The Asia Institute Proposal 2009

The Asian Ecocity Summit
&
Asian Ecocity Coalition

“Strategies for Cooperation between Ecocities”
The Next Step in a Global Network of Local Government

Location:
Daejeon, Korea

Purpose of the Asian Ecocity Summit:

The Asian Ecocity Summit will bring together representatives from cities throughout Asia that are deeply committed to achieving an ecologically sound model for development through the use of renewable energy, effective urban planning and the promotion of a culture of environmental sensitivity. Representatives will include government officials, environmental experts and representatives from business & NGOs. The conference will serve as an opportunity for representatives of each city to present their successes and discuss frankly the challenges they face in making their cities more environment-friendly and more energy efficient. The Summit will also provide an opportunity to strengthen existing relationships and to develop new networks for international collaboration.

Cities invited to participate will include those with strong environmental track records, but also those who are just starting out and wish to explain the challenges they face and to learn from world-renowned experts. Representatives from several well-established ecocities will also be on hand.

An important aspect of this summit will be the time set aside for participants to discuss possible

strategies for international cooperation and make the first steps towards establishing working relations between each other. Such cooperation could take the form of exchanges of information concerning advantageous approaches to city planning, technology, policy & education. Specific topics to be discussed could include:

- Technology transfer from cities with best practices;
- Creating economies of scale through joint investment in new technology purchases such as solar cells or wind turbines;
- Joint policy and research and development projects;
- Public education on the basics of environmental science and on the benefits and dangers of environmental issues;
- Engaging public support for environmental initiatives;
- Discussion of economic advantages of developing sustainable and energy-efficient technologies;
- Cultural and scholarly exchanges focused on the environment: the human values in question, and the relation of new policies and goals to the longer cultural traditions and history of nations vis-à-vis human life, balance, the world, and nature.

Unfortunately, most ecocity (and environmental policy) conferences held have been exclusively in English and inaccessible to those who could benefit most from participation: local government officials and businessmen in China, India and other developing regions of Asia. The Asian Ecocity Summit will provide multilingual translation and interpretation, and make a special effort to bring in members of the policy community from developing areas of Asia.

Moreover, cities in the wealthier nations can learn from poorer nations about how to do more with less, thus making the dialog more equitable and reciprocal. A significant part of the conference will concern environmental strategies from poorer nations that deserve serious consideration by those accustomed to a more wasteful lifestyle.

The majority of participants will be from Asia, but there will also be participants from Europe, the Middle East and the United States who will offer input. Representatives from the relevant international organizations (UNDP, UNEP) also will be invited.

Sections of the Summit:

TECHNOLOGY

- Green architecture
- Recycling and reuse
- Eco sanitation, water treatment
- Design and ecological city planning
- Assessing the effectiveness of currently available technologies and prospective timelines for
- availability of technologies under development for long-term implementation
- Technical, economic, cultural and political obstacles to the adoption of new technologies

ROLE OF LOCAL AND CENTRAL GOVERNMENT & BUSINESS

- Prospects for Eco business and its benefits to the ecocity
- Precedents for effective government policy

- Incentives for ecocities
- A new definition of "growth"

TRANSPORTATION

- Public transportation
- Rational city planning
- The future of the automobile in Asia
- Transportation infrastructure and public investment
- Alternative fuels and fuel distribution infrastructure

TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION

- Public/private partnerships
- International Cooperation concerning Urban Agriculture
- Successful approaches to international exchange in environmental policy
- Ecotourism
- Successful and unsuccessful precedents
- Technology transfer and economic competition

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT AND AWARENESS

- Strategies for forming consensus among citizens
- Belief systems and ecological ethics
- Policy and law
- Education, lifestyles, culture
- The role of citizen's groups and community organizing in ecocities
- Transforming the culture of a city
- Learning from more frugal cultures

BENCHMARKING/METRICS

- What is appropriate to your city?
- Where to find case studies?
- New standards for measuring growth: The need to develop a set of universally accepted axes with quantitative scale by which to measure progress (e.g. the trend in the annual per capita carbon emissions: how quickly and in what direction is the figure changing from one year to the next
- Specific issues determined by
 - cultural conditions: European, Indian, Islamic, African;
 - by geographical [conditions]: mountainous, arid, tropical;
 - by conditions of economic activity and infrastructure: manufacturing city, rural region, resort town;
 - by financial conditions: wealthy, moderate, challenged;

City-to-City Dialogue

Partnering of cities, or groups of cities, with similar needs and concerns for in-depth discussions about cooperation.

POSTER SESSION

Each city, that so desires, will feature a display about its achievements, goals, and policies.

Closing Music Festival

The Ecocity Conference will end with a one-day music festival featuring famous artists from all over Asia who will play [in] tribute to the environment.

Anticipated Results:

Short term:

The conference will establish closer working relations among Asian countries on environmental and energy issues. Participants will effectively identify possible areas for collaboration and learn from other cities.

Medium term:

The conference will establish benchmarks for ecocities and initiate formal sister ecocity connections; establish a system for objectively evaluating achievements of ecocities using the Yale Index or the UNDP index at the local level.

Efforts will be made to strengthen ties to international organizations, to engage in dialogue on curricular change with educators and students from urban studies and architecture programs, and to encourage practical change in how city planning is viewed on the level of local government.

Long-term:

Demonstrate the impact of local changes on national policy; demonstrate a measurable effect on global environmental indicators; establish global standards for ecocities.

Determine criteria for recognition as 1) beginning ecocity 2) established ecocity 3) advanced ecocity. Award recognition, opportunities for investment, for cities that reach the advanced level.

Establish an EMN (Ecocity Mayor's Network).

Publication, in multiple languages, of a manual for setting up an ecocity.

Asian Ecocity Coalition

The Asian Ecocity Coalition is an organization that promotes close cooperation between cities across Asia with the aims of improving environmental planning, modifying habits of citizens, reducing energy use, and eliminating pollution. This coalition will eventually have a full-time administrative office charged with coordinating policy and strategy between ecocities across Asia.

Any city in Asia that accepts certain principles concerning urban planning and establishes a clear set of goals for future development will be able to apply for membership in the Asian Ecocity Coalition once we have established it.

The primary functions of the Asian Ecocity Coalition will be:

- 1) To publish materials in multiple languages outlining basic strategies for reducing energy use and improving the environment in coordination with other organizations. These materials are aimed at local government and citizens.
- 2) To build close working relationships between local governments to discuss common concerns and put forth proposals for cooperation.
- 3) To arrange for the joint purchases of materials (such as solar cells) in large quantity so as to reduce the cost.
- 4) To administer a system for the open exchange of information concerning strategies and technologies.
- 5) To organize ecocity conferences and symposiums.

- 6) To undertake joint applications by multiple ecocities to international organizations for funding.
- 7) To establish evaluation criteria for assessing the progress of Ecocities and creating incentives for ecocities in cooperation with central governments and international organizations.
- 8) To promulgate new standards for measuring growth that take into account environmental factors; also translating and popularizing these standards at the local level. To recommend and to advise in the implementation of careful evaluation programs for environmental issues at the local level using Yale Index, UNDP index or some other standard.

Within the Asian Ecocity Coalition sister ecocity relationships will be established between cities with common concerns and needs.

Cities not situated in Asia will also be welcome to participate in the Asian Ecocity Coalition. Asia is the most critical region in the effort to establish a viable and realistic approach to growth, but the network itself will extend across the world.

The Asia Ecocity Coalition is different from other such efforts like the Ecocity Global Summit and Local Governments for Sustainability in that it attempts to localize its efforts. Its work will include translating materials into regional languages, encouraging exchanges between cities, and engaging local officials and decision-makers in the process of change. Only when local officials and local policy makers in Asia fully grasp the significance of new models for growth, and take them into consideration, can we hope to make true progress.

The Asian Ecocity Coalition will also put a strong emphasis on an equal and reciprocal dialogue between nations at different developmental stages. Although there is much that the developing can learn about new environmental technologies from advanced nations, there is at least as much that developed nations can learn from the developing world about strategies for living on less more comfortably. The habits that survive for living with less (cooking with a minimal amount of water, drip irrigation systems, growing vegetables on a small plot of land, avoiding unnecessary consumption, etc.) must be taught to those who have lost those skills in the process of modernization.

Schedule:

August 24

Participants arrive. Reception

April 25

Morning Session:

Strategies for establishing an ecocity

Afternoon Session:

Regional, cultural, and scale-related issues for ecocities: how to start and how to grow

Evening:

Focused discussions about cooperation

August 26

Morning Session

Successful Strategies for cooperation in building an Ecocity

Afternoon

What should an Asian Ecocity Alliance be?

Dinner

Possible Presenters:

Possible Participating organizations:

Representatives from Korea, China, Japan, Vietnam, Indonesia, India, Germany, Mongolia, Italy, Saudi Arabia, the United States, and Finland.

Korea

Local Governments for Sustainability, Korea Office

<http://www.icleikorea.or.kr/>

Korea Ecocity Network

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Solbridge International School of Business

KAIST

KRIBB

KRICT

Daejeon Environment Forum

Chungnam University

Ministry of the Environment

Ministry of Knowledge Economy

China

Tsinghua University, Department of Environmental Sciences

Friends of the Earth

representatives from Wenchuan

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http://www.fukuoka.unhabitat.org/topics/SCP/scp_e/scp_Korea/pdf/KEN_Newsletter_3rd_2008.pdf

Vietnam

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Director of the Global Policy Innovations program at the Carnegie Council for Ethics in

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Foreign Policy in Focus

Earth Institute

Ecocity World Summit

www.ecocityworldsummit.org

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KAIST

Woosong University

Chungnam University

United Nations

Korean Ministry of the Environment

Carnegie Foundation