

First Circular
(25 April, 2012)

MARCO Symposium 2012

“Strengthening Collaboration for Agro-Environmental Challenges in Monsoon Asia”

Date: 24-27 September, 2012

Venue: Epochal Tsukuba (Tsukuba International Congress Hall), Tsukuba, Japan
<http://www.epochal.or.jp/eng/index.html>

Organized by: National Institute for Agro-Environmental Sciences (NIAES)
Monsoon Asia Agro-Environmental Research Consortium (MARCO)

Supported by: Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Research Council, MAFF (*to be confirmed*)
Ibaraki University (*to be confirmed*)

Background:

Monsoon Asian countries are blessed with natural resources for agriculture by warm and seasonal humid climate, which sustain about 60% of the world’s human population within about 16% of earth’s land surface. The dominance of rice cultivation and family-owned small scale agriculture in this region has developed agro-ecosystems with long sustainability of food production and biodiversity comprising various species. On the other hand, the agro-ecosystems in monsoon Asia have been intensively disturbed or managed by human activities for many centuries and are now involved in rapid economic, social and environmental changes. As a result, a drastic deterioration of the ecosystems has been observed recently due to climate change, urbanization, pollution by toxic chemicals, or invasion of alien species. Therefore, it is imperative that researchers, engineers, and administrative authorities of this region internationally closely collaborate to meet growing needs to agriculture while harmonizing nature.

In order to meet this requirement, MARCO, or the Monsoon Asia Agro-Environmental Research Consortium, has organized by the agreement of the participants from 15 countries at the international symposium entitled “Evaluation and Effective Use of Environmental Resources for Sustainable Agriculture in Monsoon Asia: Toward International Research Collaboration”, which was held during 12-14 December, 2006 in Tsukuba, Japan. Since that, MARCO has promoted international collaboration for advancing research activities on the issues of agriculture and the environment in monsoon Asia, by hosting a couple of international symposia or workshops every year, setting up a website as a venue for exchanging consortium information, and helping train the people who will carry on activities under the consortium.

The MARCO Symposium 2012 will provide a venue for exchanging the status quo of problems and the latest results of studies, and for discussing the direction of future research and ways to strengthen collaboration for agro-environmental challenges in monsoon Asia.

Objectives:

The MARCO Symposium 2012 will organize:

- (1) Field excursion
- (2) Plenary sessions to report the status quo of problems and the latest results of studies on agriculture and environment in monsoon Asia
- (3) Parallel or satellite workshops to exchange information and discuss research plans for specific topics
- (4) The wrap-up session to discuss the direction of future research and ways to strengthen collaboration

The MARCO Symposium 2012 will aim at:

- Exchanging the status quo of problems and the latest results of studies on agriculture and environment in monsoon Asia,
- Discussing the direction of future research and ways to strengthen collaboration for agro-environmental challenges in monsoon Asia.

Tentative Program:

1st day: 24 September, Monday

- One day Excursion
 - Laboratories and facilities at the National Institute for Agro-Environmental Sciences (NIAES)
 - The rice-FACE experiment site at Tsukuba-mirai city
 - Agro-environmental landscape in Tsukuba and surrounding area

2nd day: 25 September, Tuesday

- Symposium plenary sessions
 - Keynote lectures
 - Reports for the latest information of research on major agro-environmental issues in monsoon Asia
 - Poster presentation
 - A Symposium Reception will be planed

3rd day: 26 September, Wednesday

- Parallel workshops
 - Workshop 1: Agriculture and climate change in monsoon Asia – adaptation, mitigation, and forecast
 - Workshop 2: Ecological risk assessment for the gene flow from the genetically modified crops in monsoon Asia
 - Workshop 3: New phase for utilization of soil information system in east Asia

4th day: 27 September, Thursday

- Morning: parallel workshops
 - Workshop 1 (continued)
 - Workshop 2 (continued)
 - Workshop 3 (continued)
 - Workshop 4: Possible ways to strengthen collaboration for agro-environmental challenges in monsoon Asia
- Afternoon: Symposium plenary sessions
 - Reports from parallel or satellite workshops
 - Wrap-up discussion on the direction of future research and ways to strengthen collaboration

Satellite workshops

- Satellite workshop 1: World crop FACE, 9-12 July, 2012
- Satellite workshop 2: Heavy metal pollution in Asian countries, 29-31 October, 2012

Fees for registration and participation:

Registration and participation in the symposium is free of charge, but we will ask to pay for participating in the Symposium Reception

Important dates:

End of April: Open symposium web site
End of June: Second circular with detailed program
End of June: Open registration
Beginning of August: Deadline of abstract submission
End of August: Deadline of registration
End of August: Third circular

Secretariat:

Research Coordination Office
National Institute for Agro-Environmental Sciences (NIAES)
3-1-3 Kannondai, Tsukuba, Ibaraki 305-8604, Japan
Phone: (+81)-29-838-8181
FAX: (+81)-29-838-8148
E-mail: marco2012@ml.affrc.go.jp