



ISEC Golden Jubilee Lecture Series

Inaugural Lecture on

Low-Carbon Energy Systems: Seizing Market-based Business Opportunities across Borders

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Abstract

Asia has been experiencing much faster economic growth than the world average, and has been consuming more energy and natural resources than our planet's regenerative capacity can provide. With each passing day, Asia's carbon emissions have been growing, as does its vulnerability to climate risks. The poor are the most vulnerable to these disruptions, lacking options to adapt to changing climatic conditions. The transition to a low carbon green growth in almost all of emerging economies in the Asian region is underway. This transition has become unstoppable and irreversible.

In this context, it is important to realize that the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has its own impact on the economies. Nevertheless, it has also created new once-in-a-generation opportunities for implementing hard policy reforms through economic recovery and stimulus packages. The need to accelerate the low-carbon transition as part of the pandemic recovery is unquestionable, but the question is how to do it in a cost-effective way.

This research presents a broad diagnosis of new regional cooperation opportunities in areas essential to complete the transition to a low-carbon economy by 2030 and a net zero economy by 2050-2060. It highlights where regional cooperation and coordination can have the greatest impact, by bringing together frontier knowledge of how regional cooperation has succeeded in the past. It points to a number of policy areas – trade, carbon taxation, carbon pricing, and innovation – where regional cooperation reduces the cost of implementing national actions and complements global pacts. This model also creates business opportunities for developing competitive green industries and low-carbon technologies across countries in the region.