



Summary of the Iskandar Malaysia Knowledge Sharing Workshop on Urban Green Growth in Dynamic Asia

5-6 November 2014, Johor Bahru, Malaysia

The Iskandar Malaysia Knowledge Sharing Workshop on Urban Green Growth in Dynamic Asia was co-organised by the Iskandar Regional Development Authority (IRDA) and the OECD, within the framework of the Urban Green Growth in Dynamic Asia Knowledge Sharing Platform. Its objective was to discuss urban green growth and spatial development strategies under rapid urbanisation in Iskandar Malaysia. Around 60 participants, including Asian and OECD cities, Asian national governments and key international organisations (development agencies, research institutes etc.), shared knowledge and expertise on this topic. The event was supported by the OECD Knowledge Sharing Alliance and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

1. The knowledge sharing activity

The Iskandar Malaysia Knowledge Sharing Workshop was organised around two complementary activities: site visits (5 November) and roundtable discussions (6 November). The objective of having site visits on the first day was to give participants a visual understanding of the policy challenges and opportunities related to spatial development under rapid urbanisation in Iskandar Malaysia, before engaging in informal discussions. The roundtable discussions consisted of seven small roundtables of 8-9 persons each. The objective of this particular setup was to facilitate policy peer learning and lively interactions between participants of a same table. The discussions were organised around four sessions: compact and inclusive urban centres, efficient linkages of urban and suburban areas, coastal management and an open session with six different topics suggested by all participants and carefully selected by the OECD Secretariat.

2. Key visits, discussion points and main findings

Site visits (5 November):

- Participants were taken to **Nusajaya**, a new and fast-growing urban development area in Iskandar Malaysia. The different components of development were presented, and issues such as provision of housing for low income communities, efficient provision of open space and spatial incentives for investors were discussed.
- Participants were then taken for a walk in the **Johor Bahru City Centre**, and met with the staff of the City of Johor Bahru at **Sungai Segget Office**. The main discussions revolved around the renewal of the Segget River, which is currently buried under a roadway and highly polluted. The improvement of the sewerage system, opportunities to make the downtown area more attractive to businesses, resilience to floods and land value capture tools were the main elements discussed.

- In the afternoon, participants visited the office of the **Municipal Council of Pasir Gudang**, one of the five local authorities of Iskandar Malaysia. The environmental issues associated with the industrial activities of the ports of Tanjung Langsat (e.g. air and water pollution), public and private awareness and capacity building were the main items brought into the discussion.
- Finally, participants met the staff of **LECO in the port of Tanjung Langsat**. LECO is a subsidiary of the Japanese company LION and produces green laundry detergent out of palm oil derivatives. A lively discussion took place on the economic advantages provided by the location and assets of Iskandar Malaysia, on the difficulties to be competitive on the laundry detergent market and to cope with obstacles related to lack of environmental awareness, and on the lack of R&D capacities in Malaysia.

Roundtable discussions (6 November):

- The workshop was opened by **Y. Bhg. Dato' Benjamin Hj Hasbie**, Federal Commissioner, IRDA, who highlighted the need to implement efficiently green growth at the scale of the region. **Professor Ho**, from Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, also stressed that Iskandar Malaysia presents high opportunities to shift towards a low carbon society.
- At the beginning of the roundtable discussions, a few participants shared their expectations. The following issues were brought on the table: how to translate the definition of urban areas into implementation, understanding better the role of IRDA in the development of the metropolitan region, how to develop infrastructure to match development, how to integrate the human factor and ensure social aspects are not neglected under rapid urbanisation.
- **Coastal management** was a central topic discussed by participants. It was recommended that a bilateral integrated shoreline management plan between Malaysia and Singapore was created for the Johor Straits; that at the national level, a stringent enforcement of policies and guidelines on coastal development was undertaken; and that ecologically sensitive areas along the coastline were gazetted as protected areas.
- The possibilities to develop **transport alternatives** to roads and highways in Iskandar Malaysia were discussed. Water taxis, minibuses, hybrid and electric motorbikes and cars, and car sharing are some of the transport options proposed by the participants of the workshop. Making diesel cleaner was another transport recommendation.
- **Public awareness and involvement** is one of the key governance strategies mentioned to further the urban green growth agenda and make strategies more effective. In particular, it can help to increase the use of public transport, limit the environmental impacts of citizens, and push forward the green growth agenda, among others. The following recommendations were made: to create a platform for citizens to comments on any development, to ensure that the community understands and is part of the plan/action of the government, and to involve community leaders.
- **Governance and policy effectiveness** was a recurrent theme discussed during the workshop. One of the key recommendations was that multi-sectorial plan of action must consider policy design as well as policy implementation. There are also opportunities in enhancing **policy enforcement** in Iskandar Malaysia. For instance, the 10% of space which must be allocated by each real estate developer to open space are not always developed in a way that is actually beneficial or accessible to the public.

- **Financing green spatial development strategies** is a major implementation obstacle in the region. Indeed, public authorities struggle to attract investments to finance major development works, such as infrastructure for public transport. A stronger use of economic instruments (polluter pays principles, fees, charges and taxes etc.) was recommended.

3. Follow-up of the Iskandar Malaysia Knowledge Sharing Workshop

A discussion paper on urban green growth and spatial development strategies in Iskandar Malaysia was prepared by the OECD before the workshop and distributed to all participants. The inputs of the workshop will be integrated by the OECD in this document after the workshop. The revised discussion paper will be sent for feedback a few weeks after the event, so that participants can further share knowledge on the topic. This will encourage policy dialogue through continuous exchange and learning loops. The paper will form a special chapter in the future OECD Iskandar Malaysia case study report.

The next workshop of the Knowledge Sharing Platform will be organised in Hai Phong, Viet Nam, early 2015.



Roundtable discussions at the Iskandar Malaysia Knowledge Sharing Workshop on Urban Green Growth in Dynamic Asia, 6 November 2014



Participants of the Iskandar Malaysia Knowledge Sharing Workshop on Urban Green Growth in Dynamic Asia

List of participating organisations

	Organisation
1	Iskandar Regional Development Authority, Malaysia
2	City of Johor Bahru, Malaysia (Majlis Bandaraya Johor Bahru, MBBJ)
3	Municipality of Johor Bahru Tengah, Malaysia (Majlis Perbandaran Johor Bahru Tengah, MPJBT)
4	Municipality of Kulai, Malaysia (Majlis Perbandaran Kulai, MPKu)
5	Municipality of Pasir Gudang, Malaysia (Majlis Perbandaran Pasir Gudang, MPPG)
6	Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water (KeTTHA), Malaysia
7	Sustainable Energy Development Authority (SEDA), Malaysia
8	Johor State Education Department, Malaysia (JPN Johor)
6	Johor Economic Planning Unit, Malaysia (UPENJ)
10	Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, Thailand
11	City of Hai Phong, Viet Nam
12	City of Helsinki, Finland
13	Urban Development Agency, Ministry of Construction, Viet Nam
14	Ministry of National Development, Singapore
15	Urban Redevelopment Authority, Singapore
16	Ministry of Interior, Thailand
17	Ministry of Environment, Cambodia
18	Sciences Po/CERI
19	Asian Development Bank
20	JICA / Malaysia-Japan Joint Research Project for Development of Low Carbon Society Scenarios for Asian Regions (SATREPS)
21	UNITEN
22	Konrad Adenauer Foundation
23	Universiti Teknologi Malaysia
24	Green Earth Society
25	OECD