Remodeling Energy Cooperation Scheme in North East Asia
--Beyond the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Accident--

Abstract

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Overview : On August 6, Japan's Prime Minister Naoto Kan has declared that Japan will revise its energy policy from scratch and reduce its dependence on nuclear power, aiming to create a society with less dependent on nuclear power. On August 23, the so-called feed-in-tariff law — by which utilities are required to pay a premium price for electricity from renewable sources— was enacted at the Diet, which should help Japan leap to the forefront of the solar, wind, geothermal, biofuel market in place of nuclear.

Although Japan has massively worked to regain control of damaged Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plants, and also carried out large-scale humanitarian relief efforts in the affected areas, Japan faces enormous nuclear risks entailing to regional agenda which should be tackled in the scope of the mutual interests of nuclear safety, radiation risks and even energy development/infrastructure projects to seek alternative sources such as LNG trade in North East Asia (NEA). This goal can not be achieved by Japan's effort alone. Japan needs to enhance the cooperation with the world, specifically with the neighboring countries developing a new energy cooperation scheme.

Method : Here I approach this issue with two conceptual frameworks. One is the traditional institutional framework and the other is project oriented framework.

a. Traditional institutional framework

In this region, there have been several energy-environmental cooperation scheme based on the traditional institutional framework such as APEC, ASEAN+3, APP(Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate) and EAS(East Asian Summit). Main player of these framework is the government and have standing secretariat, regular meetings and mostly organized and managed by the government officials. In the past, the achievement realized through these frameworks has been relatively small and mostly stayed in the bureaucratic and diplomatic formality.

b. Project oriented framework

To expedite and bring concrete results, energy and environmental cooperation based on the project oriented framework seems more proper. In this framework, private sector

plays a bigger role and the cooperation proceeds in efficient way. The cross border electricity grid and gas pipeline in the North East Asia would be the examples of the cooperation scheme of this type.

Expected results: After the analysis of energy-environmental cooperation in this region in the past based on the traditional and institutional framework and the project oriented framework, possible and desirable energy-environmental cooperation scheme in North East Asia will be worked out.

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