

Mid-term Action Plan of Working Group II for Joint Research on Dust and Sand Storms (2026-2030)

I. Background

Since 2008, China, Japan, and Korea have conducted joint research on dust and sandstorm (herein after DSS) through two working groups: Working Group I (WGI, focusing on DSS monitoring and modelling to improve early warning systems of DSS and exchanges scientific data and the latest research outcomes) and Working Group II (WGII, researches on countermeasures at the source areas of DSS) under the tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting (TEMM).

Over successive mid-term action plans (2011-2015, 2016-2019, and 2020-2025), WGII has achieved the following significant milestones:

1. Accumulating vegetation restoration monitoring data in China's Hulunbeier sandy land, issuing "A Guideline of Prevention and Control of Dust and Sandstorms (DSS) for Herdsmen in Northeast Asia", serving as a platform to contribute to finding DSS mitigation measures for Northeast Asia,
2. Gathering good practices related to DSS mitigation and vegetation restoration and publishing "Report on Good Practices of Desertification Control and DSS mitigation",
3. Enhancing collaboration with WGI and publishing "A summary note on the discussion of the WGII on the potential cooperative activities between the DSS WGII and WGI to overcome the DSS challenges in Northeast Asia".

The WGII aims to continue its activities under the MTAP (2026-2030). At the 17th WGII meeting held in Korea on November 7, 2024, the plan of WGII was discussed, emphasizing to strengthen cooperation between WGs. Under the TEMM framework, WGII is expected to collaborate with Mongolia to reduce dust and sandstorms as "3+X" cooperation.

This document presents the work plan for the next term (2026-2030) of WGII for Joint Research on DSS.

II. Goals

The Mid-Term Action Plan (2026-2030) includes activities to propose the regional countermeasures and contribute to the environmental policies for DSS control in

Northeast Asia. The goals of the third term Mid-Term Action Plan are as follows:

1. Enhancement of the "3+X" cooperation framework (China, Japan, Korea + Mongolia).
2. Encourage new participation for research activities.
3. Explore the possibility for conducting joint research in Mongolia, including pilot projects and capacity-building initiatives for young scientists, local communities, students and other research groups.
4. Explore opportunities for joint applications for new projects to secure funding for future collaboration.
5. Explore the possibility for contributing to global DSS initiatives by interlinking the TEMM DSS Online Portal with the UNCCD SDS Toolbox.

III. Main Activities

1. Continue the cooperation of joint research within the three countries

The ongoing cooperation in joint research among the three countries is essential for addressing DSS challenges in Northeast Asia. WGII acts as a crucial platform, enabling collaboration and the exchange of knowledge to identify and implement effective DSS mitigation measures.

2. Strengthening joint research cooperation

Share scientific information and views: Enhance WGII's role as an academic and policy exchange platform to promote sharing of scientific information and views on DSS mitigation among researchers from China, Japan, Korea, and Mongolia. Noted the Joint Declaration of the Ninth ROK-Japan-China Trilateral Summit on May 2024, enhancement of the collaboration with Mongolia through the "Trilateral + X Cooperation" framework, on reducing dust and sandstorms in East Asia is expected.

3. Enhance collaboration between the two working groups

Fully acknowledge the importance of data and research exchange between WGI and WGII, and continue efforts to enhance collaboration between the two groups.

Strengthen mechanisms to ensure seamless data flow and efficient utilization through a shared data server and the TEMM DSS Online Portal. Additionally, explore the feasibility of joint event with WGI in China, Japan, Korea, and Mongolia.

Consider exploring the possibility of WGI and WGII from each country jointly working under a common research theme.

4. Strengthening Capacity Building and Collaboration

Explore the possibility of organizing joint field surveys in Mongolia to enable

researchers to work together at the same sites, fostering exchanges and cooperation.

Encourage participation from diverse research groups, including universities and national research institutions, to expand research capacity and propose measures for addressing dust source issues. Additionally, explore opportunities to interlink the TEMM DSS Online Portal with the global institution and initiative, such as UNCCD SDS Toolbox.

IV. Expected Outcomes

1. An enhanced "3+X" among China, Japan, Korea and Mongolia, focusing on sharing scientific information and perspectives on DSS control and establishing an experts network.
2. Work summary report or joint research report on the MTAP (2026-2030)

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