Creating a New Sustainable Future
In the wake of the Fukushima Nuclear Accident caused by the massive Earthquake and Tsunami disaster on 11th March, 2011, we are having serious discussions about the energy future in Japan. One of the movements which has emerged from these discussions is the call for faster deployment of renewable energy. I am strongly convinced that renewable energy is our energy future, as they constitute the sole energy sources capable of providing safe and sustainable energy to us and future generations. This is why I decided to establish this Institute.

Since then, I have been receiving strong support from various stakeholders around the country and the world, including governmental agencies, politicians, academics, industries and civil societies. I intend to closely monitor the activities of the Institute. I expect it to be one of the strong driving forces for the promotion of renewable energy in Japan. I hope the Institute and the renewable energy development will get your support.

Recently, industries manufacturing renewable electricity equipment have learned to reduce costs after years of rapid, global deployment. For many years, hydropower, geothermal energy, and biomass have contributed to commercial power supply around the world. Now, new solar power plants and wind farms have become the lowest-cost alternatives in many parts of the world.

This development is valuable for Japan, as it has ample renewable energy resources and should have the industrial capacity to build renewable power plants just as efficiently as any other country. Renewable energy can provide extra income to people in rural areas of Japan. Additionally, most renewable power plants require high investments but very little labour and operation costs, thus fitting the needs of an ageing population.

I hope that Renewable Energy Institute can support Japanese industries and policymakers in efficiently making use of these opportunities. When this succeeds, Japan will become an energy-rich country.

Masayoshi Son
Founder and Chairperson

Tomàs Kåberger
Executive Board Chairman

Mission
1. Establish a society based on renewable energy.
2. Research and advocate policies, measures and financial/business models that are based on the dynamics of markets and society, to promote renewable energy.
3. Build up partnerships and networks with local and international organizations and civil societies.
4. Promote capacity-building and support public awareness for further recognition and deployment of renewables.

Renewable Energy Institute for a sustainable, rich society based on renewables

Policy Research
- Facing the challenges of climate change and the Fukushima nuclear accident, we focus on developing policy recommendations to shift to a new energy system in Japan centered around the expansion of renewables, a decentralized power supply and energy efficiency.
- We conduct research and support the development of renewable energy in Asia, including the promotion of the “Asia Super Grid (ASG),” which aims to realize a wide-area electricity network in Asia.
- Expanding choices for consumers and prompting fair competition and the participation of new entrants in the power market are essential to secure and advance electricity system reform in Japan. We pursue studies to identify enabling energy policies.
- To realize a non-carbon economy, we provide research that highlights the business risks of investments in coal.

Advocacy
- We discuss energy policies and systems with experts, policymakers, and media representatives to develop our policy research and recommendations.
- We work to jointly make changes from different standpoints through information and opinion exchanges with local governments, domestic and overseas energy companies, and a broad range of business operators – including power producers and suppliers.
- Renewable Energy Institute supported the establishment of the “Japan Climate Initiative (JCI),” a cross-sectoral organization of non-state actors such as companies, local governments and NGOs. JCI opens dialogues with the central government with the aim to realize a decarbonized society. We also work with organizations with a total of over 27 million members including networks of co-ops, consumer groups, community power groups and municipalities, and associations of energy-related companies, to promote the transition to the Renewable Energy Action Campaign’s sustainable energy policies. The campaign appeals to the public opinion by mobilizing a wide spectrum of organizations seeking to expand the use of renewable energy.

International Networking and Information Dissemination
- We collaborate closely with various stakeholders – such as corporations, organizations, think tanks, and NGOs, both international and domestic—that play a pioneer role in the expansion of renewable energy and climate protection measures.
- We organize international symposiums and workshops on a regular basis. Experts are invited to present and discuss the progress of integration of renewables and other compelling issues and propose solutions based on latest research.
- With the participation of experts and businesses around the world, we set up the Innovation Network to disseminate knowledge throughout Japan and to inform people overseas of developments in Japan.
- Serving as an information source on renewable energy trends and statistics in Japan, we compile data and release them on our website to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current situation in Japan.
Connecting Renewables to the Global Energy Grid

Since its foundation in 2011, Renewable Energy Institute has worked to establish the Asia Super Grid (ASG), a scheme of global energy interconnection that will enable Asian countries to exchange rich, natural renewable energy resources, such as wind and solar power in Mongolia.

With the Paris Agreement serving as an initiative towards transitioning to carbon-free societies in the latter half of the 21st century, as well as growing demand for realizing 100% renewable energy, development of global energy interconnections has become an even more important challenge to address.

In Europe, national grids are increasingly being connected to better integrate renewables. In contrast, in East Asia, very limited connections have been formed between China, Mongolia, Russia, and other neighboring countries.

In March 2016, the Global Energy Interconnection Development and Cooperation Organization (GEIDCO) was founded as an international non-profit organization for developing global power transmission networks and realizing greater scale and efficiency in the use of renewable energy. GEIDCO is composed of utilities and global transmission-related corporations, universities, and research institutions from China, Korea, Brazil, Russia, and other nations. Renewable Energy Institute participates as one of its council members.
Increasing Renewable Energy in Japan

Many countries and regions around the globe have already turned to renewables as a main energy source, with the aim of supplying 40–50% of total power consumption from renewables by 2030. In contrast, in its Long-term Energy Supply and Demand Outlook, the Japanese government has set its target for 2030 at 22–24%, a figure none would see as ambitious.

Japan can achieve significant growth in renewable energy only by setting a much higher national target, as well as reviewing restricted connections to grids that hinder development and old, unreasonable regulations.

Renewable Energy Institute helps to solve these and other challenges through conducting studies and research into electricity systems, renewable energy policy programs, and market environments, among others. We release our findings in the form of reports, symposiums, and lectures.

Operational Challenges for Reducing Costs in Renewable Energy

The report evaluates the outcome of the revised FIT scheme in Japan that was in effect from 2017 and identifies challenges from an operational perspective and makes projections for the future. In particular, it looks into the effects of the new scheme that established an approval system as a measure against non-operating projects, as well as other amendments such as the introduction of multi-year tariffs and tariff targets, and the auction system. The report also makes an estimation of renewable energy power generation cost in 2017. (June 2018)

Restructuring Japan’s Bioenergy Strategy

Bioenergy has a significant potential in Japan and its use for power generation has rapidly expanded since the introduction of the FIT scheme in July 2012. However, its use for heat and the sustainability framework are still underdeveloped and a need to review the current policy scheme remains. This report provides an overview of the basic characteristics of bioenergy, presents the learnings from the European experiences, and examines the long-term vision to revise Japan’s bioenergy strategy showing immediate solutions for each scope of application. (June 2018, Japanese version published in April 2017)

Guidebook to Renewable Energy Procurement

Global efforts to use renewable energy has seen rapid growth and investors seeking for sustainable development in companies are increasingly demanding for renewable energy use. This guidebook is intended to inform companies and local governments how purchasing of renewables can deliver benefits and reveals the different range of criteria available today in the selection process. Specific procurement methods with concrete examples are demonstrated, together with an introduction to international certifications and evaluation systems for renewables. (January 2018)
The Paris Agreement, negotiated at the United Nations COP21 at the end of 2015, came into force in less than a year, in November 2016. It carries tremendous significance as an effective international treaty for establishing a carbon-free society in the latter half of this century.

Since the Agreement was negotiated, a massive exodus from coal-related businesses has been observed worldwide. Even the world’s biggest coal consumers, such as China and the United States, are reducing their consumption, and major coal mining companies have been going bankrupt one after another. The largest European power companies shut down and divested a number of coal-fired power plants. Rapid withdrawals and divestments of investments from fossil fuel resources, as well as the strengthening of carbon emission regulations on coal-fired power plants, have spurred withdrawals from the coal business.

However, Japan’s Basic Energy Plan positions coal-fired power plants as a key base-load power source. Private-sector companies still plan to construct many new coal-fired power plants.

Thus, spearheading climate change initiatives, Renewable Energy Institute works to promote renewables and accelerate abandonment of fossil fuels, especially coal, mainly through producing reports that cover movements around the globe and holding environmental finance symposiums for financial institutions and corporations.

Business Risks of New Coal-fired Power Plant Projects in Japan

Since the adoption and enforcement of the Paris Agreement, a movement to withdraw from the coal business has been growing in the world, with the aim of transitioning to a decarbonized economy. In Japan, however, constructions of new coal-fired power plants are planned. This report examines the current status and future outlook for electricity supply and demand, and clarifies the business risks of new coal-fired power plant projects. The report points out that the capacity factor of coal-fired power plants, which is now 80%, could significantly decline to as low as 56% by FY 2026 if the new coal-fired power plant projects are realized, and this value could be less than 50% if 5% reduction of electricity demand is achieved by energy savings and efficiency. (September 2017, Japanese version published in July 2017)

Joint Initiatives for the Turnaround of Energy Policies

Japan Climate Initiative

Since the adoption of the Paris Agreement, which aims to realize a decarbonized society, movements to establish cross-sectoral organizations of various non-state actors such as companies, local governments and NGOs have been getting underway. Taking the lead in these global movements in Japan, the “Japan Climate Initiative” was established in July 2018. As the secretariat office, Renewable Energy Institute, together with WWF Japan and CDP Japan, has been involved in the preparations for the establishment of this network.

Renewable Energy Users Network

Since April 2018, Renewable Energy Institute runs the “Renewable Energy Users Network (RE-Users).” Core members of the network are corporate members responsible for the environment and energy. The network provides appropriate resources and information they need to accelerate renewable energy procurement in Japan. They receive latest information on domestic and overseas cases in the form of monthly newsletters and regular information exchange meetings are held.

Cooperation with the Renewable Energy Council and Local Government Agencies

In July 2011, to further promote renewables, several local governments around Japan jointly established the Renewable Energy Council and the Designated City Council on Renewable Energy. Renewable Energy Institute actively cooperates with the two Councils by preparing policy recommendations and holding seminars.
Establishment of the Innovation Network

In 2012, Renewable Energy Institute founded the Innovation Network, an organization of global experts that use their expertise and experience in policy programs related to renewable energy, energy efficiency, and climate change to promote renewables. Members of the Network exchange information on different countries’ (including Japan’s) energy policies, and their discussions help us prepare policy recommendations for Japan.

Meetings with the Press

The press has a critical role to play in disseminating accurate information about renewable energy trends. Renewable Energy Institute regularly hosts press conferences to interview foreign experts visiting Japan. Many journalists and reporters attend each event and ask questions with great interest.

Website for Public Relations

Renewable Energy Institute’s website carries several serial columns such as the Renewables Update. In these columns, energy experts in Japan and overseas, as well as our own researchers, give simple, easy-to-understand explanations about a range of topics that draw local and/or international attention.

The Statistics page regularly updates data in Japanese and English to illustrate the current status of renewables deployment and of the electricity sector in Japan.

Annual International Symposium, REvision

For the past few years, renewables have achieved rapid international growth. Their success, however, is not accurately recognized in Japan. Trends in Japan’s energy policies, in turn, have not been fully publicized on a worldwide scale.

From 2012, Renewable Energy Institute has held an annual international symposium, REvision, every March. World-class experts from the fields of renewables and energy policy are invited to share their expertise in Japan. The conference has now been recognized and established as an opportunity to obtain the latest, most accurate information in Japan on global trends regarding renewables.

How to Help

Renewable Energy Institute works to make society more sustainable and prosperous. Your engagement and support enable us to work for this purpose.

Stay Informed

Support us by understanding our activities. You can subscribe to our e-mail newsletter, Renewable Energy Institute News, which will inform you about upcoming symposiums, workshops and other events. It also notifies you of new content — such as reports, proposals, column articles and statistical data — on the website. Please sign up on the website (www.renewable-ei.org/en/) to stay updated.

Make a Donation

Renewable Energy Institute welcomes donations in various forms. Your contributions will enable us to conduct studies and research on renewable energy, make policy recommendations, develop international networks, and distribute relevant information. We appreciate your support.

For inquiries

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About Renewable Energy Institute

Renewable Energy Institute is a non-profit think tank that aims to build a sustainable, rich society based on renewable energy. It was established in August 2011, in the aftermath of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant accident, by Mr. Masayoshi Son, Chairman & CEO of SoftBank Corp., with his own resources.