

Prospects for Multilateral Energy Cooperation in Northeast Asia

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Abstract

This paper aims to review the development of energy cooperation in Northeast Asia, to identify issues therein and to suggest a future direction for the cooperative framework to materialize the potential for mutual benefits among the countries involved. Northeast Asia accounts for a big chunk of the world in every respect, with 24 percent of world population, 19 percent of world GDP and 18 percent of world carbon dioxide emissions, to name a few. However, the region is also characterized by vulnerability to energy supply security and environmental degradation. A huge potential for mutual benefits from energy cooperation has been identified and dialogues have taken place to pave the way for its realization. Participating countries have agreed on basic concepts of energy cooperation in the region, including potential areas for cooperation such as policy coordination, data and information sharing, multilateral energy projects and energy-related environmental issues. Strategies and institutional framework are under development and their shape, at least at the initial stage, is being visualized through communiqués and joint statements. But it is also true that there are some political and economic hurdles lying ahead, some of which are preventing the cooperative framework from moving forward at the moment. The paper introduces KEEI's view on the subject and concludes by encouraging more active participation by China and Japan and stressing the need for more dialogues through the Inter-governmental Consultation Mechanism which was adopted in the meeting of the parties in Vladivostok last year.

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