

## Comment Form [FR1]

February 25, 2016

<b>Title of the Project</b>	<b>Biodiversity-driven Nutrient Cycling and Human well-being in Socio-Ecological Systems</b>		
<b>Research Term</b>	<b>FR1</b>	<b>Project Leader</b>	<b>OKUDA Noboru</b>
<b>General advice and comments of the PEC:</b>			
<p>The PEC was pleased to note progress in comparison to last year.</p> <p>While this was probably in reaction to PEC comments from last year, the presentation focused overwhelmingly on the work in local governance, with the case study in the Lake Biwa watershed well explained and some interesting insights from the Laguna de Bay case study presented. However, as a result of this local governance focus, the natural science aspects (nutrient cycling, biodiversity) were not very visible. A better balance needs to be struck among the different aspects of the project. Perhaps this apparent lack of balance among the project elements is not just a presentational issue, but relates to the need to further clarify and articulate how the active engagement at the community level fits within the broader issues of eutrophication, nutrients, and biodiversity. A number of suggestions on how to increase the coherence among the project elements were made by PEC members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Clarifying the institutional framework.</li><li>● To start with a flow model of nutrients and pollutants and relate this to specific stakeholders.</li><li>● Making further use of the notion of natural capital, including how the biophysical changes in the watersheds affect natural capital and how changes in natural capital contribute to wellbeing.</li></ul> <p>In spite of the presentation's emphasis on the governance work with local communities, the social research side of the project also remained somewhat obscure. It would have been useful to know what sort of data were collected, from what sources, and what preliminary results were gained. Perhaps the participation of researchers in the social sciences and humanities still needs to increase. It was also pointed out that the notion of wellbeing is important, but the discussion needs to be deepened and (for example) include contributions from environmental ethics or philosophy.</p> <p>Finally, in line with observations last year, the PEC wondered how the project's work would link to the global level, in other words, what the relevance of the Lake Biwa experience is to global environmental studies, what its value is in a wider context. Addressing the overall problem more clearly (rather than only the local situation) would also bring out the novelty of the project better.</p>			