



Capacity Building Workshop on Carbon Governance in Asia: Bridging Scales and Disciplines

1–3 November 2010. Yokohama (Pacifico Building, APEC meeting site)

Leading scientists and policy-makers from 10 countries in the Asia Pacific region met in Yokohama to discuss during three days the challenges and opportunities for carbon governance in Asia. The workshop previous to the APEC meeting alerted about the risks of the lack of climate governance in the continent, and urged the APEC leaders to use the APEC meeting this week as an opportunity to coordinate action to tackle climate change in the region urgently.

Even though the per capita emissions are still low in Asia, the continent is already the largest contributor for greenhouse gas emissions worldwide. Moreover, the emissions tend to increase rapidly in the next years, particularly in urban areas, which will contribute to the acceleration of climatic changes and potentially can lead to irreversible consequences. New forms of governance at national and regional level are needed urgently to complement the limited global efforts. The region has also been heavily affected by climatic change, and it is in the region own interest to manage carbon effectively and timely.

Asia is the key region in world to help manage climate change. Asian contribution is already dominating the global carbon emissions. But within Asia, huge differences in welfare, governance systems, and carbon emission trajectories exist, both within as well as between states. These differences influence agenda setting and resource allocations of decision makers who have to manage overlapping as well as conflicting environmental and non-environmental policy domains. Future research in the region needs to be integrative, taking into account the interlinkages between carbon governance and other fields of governance. Asia still has immense development challenges, but has advanced in poverty reduction in the last years.

A key message from the workshop is that pathways of regional development are sequences of interrelated changes in social, economic and governance systems. They vary from place to place and over time, are based on different drivers and problem perceptions in ways that are likely to have different consequences on how carbon governance is being shaped. Carbon governance takes place at local, national and regional level and between these levels. Thus it is a multilevel governance challenge that includes actors and agents at all levels. These actors are increasingly non-state actors like environmental advocacy groups, businesses, and scientific networks. The workshop emphasised that this multilevel characteristic requires a better scientific understanding and political awareness of norms and standards in carbon governance. Norms that are compatible between levels and policy domains while in parallel reflect that carbon governance is embedded in different cultural, social, economical, and political contexts.

The meeting was organized by the Global Carbon Project, the Earth System Governance Project, and the United Nations University – Institute for Advanced Studies, with the support

of the Asia Pacific Network on Global Change Research. A dozen early career researchers from 10 countries in the Asia Pacific region, selected on their potential to become the future academic leaders in the region, attended the workshop. Together with leading scientists from the United States, Australia, Japan, and China, as well as many observers and guest-speakers from the academic community and local and national government agencies and international organisations, they addressed the daunting challenges for research and policy of carbon governance in Asia.

Contact and further information:

Capacity building workshop in Carbon Governance in Asia: www.gcp-urcm.org/CG

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