

# ECO



## Obstructive deaf-initions

The definitions debate for afforestation and reforestation in the CDM rages on – or rather whimpers. This non-issue is an already concluded decision from Marrakech and should be a formality, but is being kept open by a small minority of the Parties – Canada, Japan, Colombia, Russia and New Zealand (surprise, surprise).

Most Parties know what they voted on in Marrakech – that the definitions for afforestation, reforestation and deforestation apply to all sinks, under whatever Article, and have a 1990 base year. What a surprise it must have been to see the loophole squad swoop in on that “final” decision.

Canada nobly argues that its position is a sound one intended to increase land available for “reforestation” projects, allow for more land and greater opportunity for projects with “high environmental and social benefits” to be pursued, and to make better historical land use data available to determine eligibility. Let us take these one by one.

The first point amounts to something of a land grab – a chance to get cheaper projects in the door since there would be many more offers for projects on eligible land area under the same cap. Reforestation activities on recently deforested lands will prevent opportunities for natural regrowth on land more likely to yield biodiversity-rich natural regeneration. The second point is quite ironic. Canada conveniently concludes that the weak environmental impact requirements for other CDM projects should apply here, and that there is no need to **open this up for debate**. Despite the fact that SBSTA is clearly mandated to “take into account socio-economic and environmental impacts, including impacts on biodiversity and natural ecosystems”, which is different from energy

projects. Finally, the claim regarding data availability is simply not true. The year 1990 was not that long ago. There are substantial data sets available with worldwide coverage.

### Permanence

Permanence has been recognised as one of the critical issues for sinks projects and ECO looks forward to a vigorous debate on this topic today in the Contact Group. In particular, we would be very interested to hear the views of those Parties that have not commented on the T-CER concept, particularly Canada and Japan which are conspicuous in their silence. CAN (see our submission to the UNFCCC) agrees with the general views of many Parties (and the OECD) that the T-CER concept represents the best of the options on the table for addressing the accounting part of permanence. The other proposals simply fail to do this.

Assigning liability for any re-emissions is the key to this issue. The risk management ideas put forth by Canada are not a solution to permanence. They can only be a complement to liability provisions because, without liability, there is no need for anyone to manage the risk. What then is the position of Canada and others on determining liability?

Another issue that is key for non-permanence is the requirement that only those projects with an intrinsic likelihood to store the carbon *in the long-term* (remember Art. 12.5 of the Kyoto Protocol?) should be eligible. Clearly, monoculture plantations with their propensity for negative environmental impacts (e.g. exhaustion of soils and groundwater levels) cannot be sustained in the long-term (i.e. several hundreds of years). Monoculture plantations simply do not merit any CDM subsidies and the COP should make this clear.

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## GEF in the firing line

It is good to see the mighty and arrogant humbled, if only briefly. In Wednesday’s SBI plenary, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and its partner implementing agencies were strongly criticised for painting too rosy a picture in their progress report while failing to address the essence and spirit of the memorandum of understanding signed with the COP.

Agencies including the World Bank and the UNDP were pulled up for dictating projects to countries, having complicated approval and implementation procedures, and for charging exorbitant fees.

Central Africa held them responsible for its delay in publishing its National Communication. According to its delegate, the GEF and World Bank failed to deliver any money to complete it, preventing the nation from fulfilling its obligation as a Party to the Convention.

Other problem issues raised by G77 delegations included the extremely slow approval process for projects, and imbalance in terms of the concentration of projects in one region to the detriment of others. Kenya argued that although 75 per cent of all LDCs were in Africa, they received a disproportionately small piece of the GEF pie.

To rectify this situation, G77 delegations called for streamlining of the project cycle, and emphasised the need to democratise GEF and make it more transparent and accountable.

In response, UNDP’s representative said the “approval culture” still prevailed and that their yardstick was based on the amount of money pushed through, instead of the number and quality of projects on the ground.

Despite these frustrations, the GEF and

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## Weak status on ozone and climate

The fact that fluorinated gases with high global warming potential are being introduced as replacements for ozone-depleting substances is an unfortunate irony. A COP conclusion on this issue of harmonising ozone and climate policy is an excellent opportunity to find ways of avoiding hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) and perfluorocarbons (PFCs), the so called "F" gases, during the phase-out of ozone-depleting substances.

Unfortunately, it seems that SBSTA will forward a weak series of recommendations that could easily be ignored, and result in a special IPCC joint report with the Technical and Economic Advisory Panel of the Montreal Protocol (TEAP).

This will, if trends continue, give alternatives to HFCs much less consideration than they need. Meanwhile, an increasing number of companies are committing themselves to non-F gas alternatives, and policies in several countries are setting them on the road to elimination. The message is clear: HFCs and PFCs should be on their way out.

In contrast, SBSTA conclusions are as hard-hitting as a West Indian cricket batsman being duped by an Indian spinner's googly. Mere suggestions to Parties to think about maybe doing something voluntary will not have an impact. To make the best of the situation, COP should at least ask Parties to report on the progress they are making in achieving ozone protection in a climate-

friendly manner.

A joint IPCC/TEAP report on technological options is a welcome initiative. What is most lacking in current literature is information about alternatives to F-gases. For that reason, the report should be mandated to look beyond assessments already made by these bodies. For example, while the TEAP has a wealth of literature to draw on, it is noticeably lacking in serious evaluations of alternative practices and substances. Furthermore, experts from all stakeholder groups should be consulted for contributions to the report, and not just industry. There are NGOs and others active in the issue with information to add. A notable example is Greenpeace, which launched the technology currently in the majority of new refrigerators being manufactured in Europe.

This item must not be concluded by COP8. There are outstanding issues which need resolution, and this is an inter-institutional and global issue different from other items such as PAMs. Opportunities for reviewing developments in this fast-evolving issue should be permitted.

Finally, COP8 should exhort the Meeting of Parties to the Montreal Protocol to take up this discussion and consider how climate change can be considered in its activities, such as under the Multilateral Fund. Perhaps the MOP will show more backbone than SBSTA and look for ways of yielding concrete results.

– *Obstructive deaf-initiations, from front page*  
**Modalities**

Parties must not lose sight of the critical modalities that SBSTA is charged to address as per the mandate of COP7. These should not slide into obscurity over the next months as we proceed to COP9 and CDM operational rules. For the COP to neglect them, distracted by pointless debates over base years, would be a dereliction of duty.

- CDM sinks projects must be additional to Business As Usual projects. This is clearly recognised in the Marrakech Accords
- Leakage – environmental, social and economic – is a very serious risk and must be firmly addressed. If Parties pursue projects such as forest restoration and agro-forestry in an effective participatory manner, perhaps there is a chance to reduce leakage.
- The COP must agree on common and shared standards and criteria for managing environmental and social impacts, including

impacts on biodiversity and natural ecosystems, as called for at COP7. Many submissions make good rhetorical reference to the possibility of negative impacts from CDM afforestation and reforestation projects and the need to address these. To ensure that all Parties are operating from the same set of rules, a common framework to address and mitigate impacts in a proactive design mode is absolutely essential. ECO and others will be watching.

## Climate justice forum

The India Climate Justice Summit will be held on Saturday from 9am to 6.30pm and on Sunday from 9am to 5.30pm at the Constitution Club, Rafi Marg, New Delhi. It aims to redefine climate change from human rights, environmental justice, labour and governance perspectives. For details, contact Amit at 0981-0346161.

## “Fossil of the Day” Award

It was an impressive day for Canada's delegation yesterday when it scored a hatrick by winning all three fossil awards.

It was awarded first prize for putting forward the worst of all submissions on sinks in the CDM – a proposal enabling large monoculture plantations and ignoring local communities.

The second prize was awarded for its intervention on the review of Annex-I national communications. It rejected the performance measurement and demanded that PAMs and emission trends should not be linked.

It scooped the third prize for its suggestion to scrap the agenda item on fluorinated gases and have the issue dealt with elsewhere – a feeble attempt not to discuss the issue.

The fossil awards' presentations are held daily at 6pm in the main lobby (ground floor) of the main building. All are welcome to join this fun-filled ceremony.

## Party, party, party...

The NGO party on **Saturday, October 26** will offer conference participants a great opportunity to unwind, meet others in a social setting and have fun, after four days of intense negotiations. Hosted by the Climate Action Network, it will be held from **2030 to 0030 hours** at the **Jacaranda**, which is located within the **Habitat Centre on Lodhi Road**. The venue is a 15-minute drive from the convention centre. All are welcome and entrance is free.

– *GEF in the firing line, from front page*  
partners will still get to manage the funds decided in Marrakech, and more. And they will probably continue to be arrogant and behave in a high-handed manner with the weakest of their partners. Nevertheless, it was good to see the SBI, led by its chairman Mr Raul Estrada, ruffle some of their feathers.

## THANKS

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