



Regulatory and Governance Options for Geoengineering

Project

Duration

Dec 2011 - Dec 2012

In this research project for the Federal Environment Agency, Ecologic Institute develops specific proposals for governance of geoengineering at the international level. Based on a comprehensive analysis of regulatory framework and its gaps, the study identifies general options and specific recommended actions for the effective governance of geoengineering. A key consideration is that the recommendations can be implemented in practice.

Geoengineering is a generic term describing a range of concepts and techniques which are intended to reduce climate change or its impacts, independent of reducing emissions. The concepts mainly include two broad categories: One range of concepts seek to reflect sunlight from the earth and thus to directly cool the global temperature. Other concepts involve removing greenhouse gases from the atmosphere. While the feasibility and potential side effects of many of these concepts is unclear, they already raise important legal, political, scientific and ethical concerns.

Designing governance structures presupposes criteria and notions regarding which objectives and functions the governance of geoengineering is intended to fulfil. The debate on geoengineering has so far largely ignored this aspect. In this respect, the team at Ecologic Institute can build on the results of previous projects.

The study analyses the international legal framework and to what extent and under which conditions geoengineering is permitted under existing international law. On this basis, Ecologic Institute identifies criteria and options for desirable governance structures. The study makes specific proposals for effective governance of geoengineering at the international level. The project team can draw on its practical experience in international negotiations and institutions in order to go beyond the legal analysis and to focus on recommendations that can be implemented in practice.

Funding

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