

Round Table: What scope for Technology Policy for Energy and Climate Change?

Transferring obsolete technologies and pollution heavens: is climate change providing a way out?



International Workshop on

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Definition of Technology Transfer (TT)

... transfer of technologies from high-income industrialised nations to low-income nations ...

In the past, TT has been seen as a way of helping these nations to industrialise and thereby to increase their living standards.

Now, it is also being seen as a way of ensuring that development in poor countries does not occur at the expense of the environment (Sustainable Development).

The idea is to transfer new, clean technologies to these countries cheaply so that they do not use outdated, polluting technologies to generate their wealth.

To whoms benefit?

Obsolete and harmful technologies have often been offloaded onto poor countries when they are not wanted or are even prohibited in high-income countries.

e.g. Pesticides,

e.g. Agriculture, Biodiversity

Manufacturing operations in low-income countries sometimes operate to lower standards, so that the potential for life-threatening accidents and routine environmentally damaging emissions is far greater.

The tendency in the past has been to transfer large-scale, complex, capital-intensive, labour-saving technologies to low-income countries. This means effectively that aid money returns to the high-income countries to pay them for their supply of equipment and skilled personnel.

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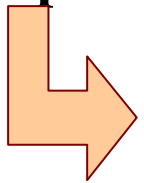
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Technology Transfer under UNFCCC

Art. 4.5 : developed countries ... shall take all practicable steps to promote, facilitate, and finance, as appropriate, the transfer of, or access to , environmentally sound technologies to other Parties, particularly developing country Parties.

In addition, TT should support Sustainable Development (that each society may define differently).

How to avoid developing countries following the historic GHG (climate energy) path? How to avoid the use of past unsustainable, obsolete practices and to move rapidly towards better technologies **if the developed world itself is not changing?**



Continued use of nuclear energy (radioactive waste, proliferation risk...)
Continued use of coal (climate destruction, water pollution – mining...)

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Bad example energy sector

- Past ... Bataan nuclear power plant

... bought from the USA company Westinghouse and built in the Philippines at a cost of \$2.3 billion in 1984. The reactor has never operated, because it is built in an earthquake zone. Yet the Philippines has been paying off until 2007. The nuclear industry is pushing nuclear power as a way of reducing greenhouse emissions in developing countries.

- Future coal with CO₂ capture and storage (CCS)?

... CCS still an unproven technology, high costs, liability, risk of leakage, monitoring, continued dependence on fossil fuels – push for CCS to be tested in developing countries

Needs - Points for discussion

Climate change is not providing a way out by itself to prevent transfer of obsolete technologies. What is needed is improving TT quality, by

- setting higher standards (e.g. Golden Standard in CDM)
- protecting intellectual property rights
- creating awareness about products
- reflecting local/regional/national needs (not a comprehensive list)

What is really needed are small-scale, cheap, adaptable, clean technologies that are more suited to nations. While western technologies tend to be centralised and to offer advantages to those with power and wealth, technologies that are more decentralised, localised and integrated may be more appropriate to the poor.