



WATCH VIDEO

SHARE/E-MAIL

SEARCH FRONTLINE



CARBON WATCH
TRACKING THE NEW CURRENCIES OF GLOBAL WARMING

A JOINT PROJECT
WITH THE



CENTER FOR
INVESTIGATIVE
REPORTING

Miscounting Carbon

Climate Watch Blog

April 12, 2010 BY Mark Schapiro



Climate Change Headlines

U.N. Forecasts Less Than 1 Bln Kyoto Offsets By 2012

Source: Reuters - A United Nations agency on Wednesday cut its forecast for pre-2012 Kyoto Protocol carbon offsets, estimating for the first time that less than 1 billion tonnes will come to market before the climate pact expires.

JA welcomes Spanish donation to Adaptation Fund

Source: Jamaica Observer - JAMAICA has welcomed news of Spain's euro 45-million contribution to the Adaptation Fund, from which developing countries are to benefit in their efforts to fortify themselves against the ill effects of climate change.

Japan, Germany, Denmark ready to cooperate with Belarus under Kyoto Protocol

Source: BelTA - Japan, Germany and Denmark are ready to cooperate with Belarus within the framework of the Kyoto Protocol, Alexander Grebenkov, national coordinator-expert of the Support to the Kyoto Protocol Implementation project, told reporters.

Kenya Turns to Carbon Trade in a Bid to Curb Climate Change

Source: Newstime Africa - Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga has said the country is keen to partner with investment bankers to promote trading in carbon markets and ensure the rehabilitation of the Mau and other threatened forests in the country.

How China and India Sabotaged the UN Climate Summit

Source: Spiegel - What really went on at the UN climate conference in Copenhagen? Secret recordings obtained by SPIEGEL reveal how China and India prevented an agreement on tackling climate change at the crucial meeting.

RSSbox powered by rssinclude.com



Mark Schapiro's stories have appeared in the publications *Harper's*, *The Nation*, *Mother Jones*, and *The Atlantic Monthly*, among others. He is also the author of *Exposed: The Toxic Chemistry of Everyday Products*, and *What's at Stake for American Power*.

The treacherous nature of measuring the veracity of carbon offsets was highlighted once again late last month when the United Nations suspended the firm TuvSud, responsible for nearly one quarter of the carbon offsets on the market today. The German company is one of twenty-six companies the UN has permitted to act as what it calls 'validators' of the offset system, charged with affirming that promises to reduce emissions in a developing country project--wind power, solar energy, methane reduction, etc--actually deliver the promised reductions. On March 26, the UN removed the company's ability to continue validating those projects--creating overnight uncertainty in the markets over the veracity of the projects it had been hired to validate. Such offsets based in developing countries are expected to account for at least a third of Europe's anticipated emission reductions by 2012, according to recent estimates

by the [European Environment Agency](#).

At the time of its suspension, TuvSud was the second biggest validator in the world, responsible for more than 1,200 projects over the past eight years. The UN's Executive Board cited the company's willingness to approve projects despite concerns over their actual [emission reduction potential](#)--a quality known as additionality--and the lack of technical experience of personnel assigned to the task. Some of the company's approved projects have been highly controversial, such as the Xioxai dam in China--which has led to the eviction of 7,500 people from their homes, according to the [International Rivers Network](#). Credits from that project have been used by major European companies such as the giant German utility RWE.

The action comes on the heels of two other suspensions of validation firms for similar reasons, and which together represented more than half of the carbon offset market, as I wrote about recently in [Harper's](#). Those two validators, the Norwegian company DNV and the Swiss company SGS, have since been reinstated. But the latest suspension means that two-thirds of the offset projects now available to industries operating under the emission reduction requirements of the Kyoto Protocol were, according to a database compiled by the [UN Environment Program](#), validated by firms whose methodologies, skill levels and measurements have been called into question by the United Nations, which is charged with overseeing the offset market.

I also found that the United Nations does not have the power to pull those questionable credits off the market--which means that European industries are still using them to meet their emission limits. The credits bearing TuvSud's stamp of approval prior to its suspension, like those of DNV and SGS prior to their suspension, are still available for purchase by industries seeking to use offsets to continue emitting greenhouse gases at home--though they may leave the mistaken impression, due to faulty measurements, of more emission reductions than have actually occurred.

Post Your Reaction

First Name

Last Name

City

State (or Country)

E-Mail Address

Your Comments

- You may post this
- Please do not post my name
- Please do not post this
- Sign me up for the FRONTLINE/World newsletter

send your reaction

[HOME](#) • [STORIES](#) • [REACT](#) • [WATCH](#) • [ABOUT](#) • [EDUCATORS](#) • [DISPATCHES](#) • [NEWSLETTER](#) • [CONTACT US](#) • [FRONTLINE](#)

[Privacy Policy](#) • © 2002-2010 WGBH Educational Foundation. All Rights Reserved.