

Views on the Technology Mechanism

On May 23rd, ECN held a side-event that aimed to present an overview of the current state of the UNFCCC Technology Mechanism and give insight into practical initiatives supporting technology transfer to developing countries within and outside the UNFCCC. The event was organised in collaboration with NREL, UNEP, the UNEP Risoe Centre, GIZ and BMU.

The event also focussed specifically on the Technology Executive Committee (TEC) and how the TEC can fill in its role as the policy arm of the Technology Mechanism. This question was discussed based on a contribution by WRI and ECN by several members of a panel.

Presentations can be downloaded via the [UNFCCC side-event schedule list](#).

<i>Introductory presentations</i>	
The chair of the event welcomes the audience. He reminds the audience that the Technology Mechanism actually has a strong mandate in the UNFCCC. Article 4.5 was already implemented to a certain degree in the first round of Technology Needs Assessments (TNAs) in the 1995-2000 period, and the Expert Group on Technology Transfer (EGTT) which ran until 2010, when it was replaced by the TEC.	Holger Liptow (GIZ) www.giz.de
It remains a question how the Technology Mechanism is going to reach its aims of enabling mitigation and adaptation through enhancing technology development and transfer. The technology cycle gives some guidance on actors, and interventions on market pull and technology push, but it ignores that capabilities in countries are important and that innovation does not always happen sequentially. Countries need capacity to maintain, operate, regulate and adapt technology, but preferably also to manufacture and innovate. A framework is suggested for the Technology Mechanism with activities on the country/regional level and the global level, as well as for early RD&D phases and more mature technologies. http://www.ecn.nl/docs/library/report/2010/b10002.pdf	Heleen de Coninck (ECN) www.ecn.nl/ps/iec
<i>Practical examples of technology activities</i>	
The UNEP Risoe Centre, funded by GEF with a USD 7-8 million budget, is facilitating a TNAs process in 36 countries. The process does not only identify technology needs, but also addresses the question how the needs can be addressed. This is done in a Technology Action Plan. The process towards a tailor-made per country but needs to involve stakeholder engagement, data collection and technology prioritisation. www.tech-action.org	John Christensen (URC) www.uneprisoe.org

<p>The Clean Energy Solutions Centre (CESC), run out of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in the United States, is responding to various concrete questions on clean energy from actors in developing countries. Initial responses are given within 2 days. It is only remote assistance, by phone, email dialogue or data sharing and straightforward analysis. In addition, the CESC serves as a curated library of best practice reports, data, and analysis tools on clean energy policies.</p> <p>www.cleanenergysolutions.org</p>	<p>Ron Benioff (NREL)</p> <p>www.nrel.gov</p>
<p>Another practical example of activities already going on relevant to the technology discussions is the Global Atlas for Wind and Solar, a joint effort of the Multilateral Working Group on Solar and Wind Energy Technologies under the Clean Energy Ministerial. A video presentation showed the main functions of the prototype of the Global Atlas and highlighted the relevance of good data for renewable energy planning and investments.</p> <p>http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40ezihCzJLA&feature=youtu.be</p>	<p>Video (BMU and IRENA)</p> <p>http://www.cleanenergyministerial.org/our_work/solar_and_wind/index.html</p>
<p>An online tool, that is applied in the abovementioned TNA process, is the ClimateTechWiki. Led by UNDP, it contains technical descriptions and case studies for over 150 technologies, in both adaptation and mitigation.</p> <p>www.climatetechwiki.org</p>	<p>Laura Würtenberger (ECN)</p> <p>www.ecn.nl/ps/iec</p>
<p><i>Questions and discussion by audience</i></p>	
<p>Q1: In the innovation concepts and TNA process presented, where is technology assessment taking place? – Heleen: In the technology innovation system approach, no judgment is given as to whether a technology is assessed positively or negatively. Some elements of technology acceptance is given in the legitimization function. John: the TNA process assesses technology in various tools, including the TNAssess and in the prioritisation.</p> <p>Q2: The Technology Mechanism will not work unless it is linked with the finance mechanism: the Green Climate Fund. Has any of the speakers looked into the links? – John: This is not explicitly looked at although in a way the Technology Mechanism is sowing the seeds for future business and finance opportunities. Heleen: The Technology Mechanism needs to be financed, but it is a chicken and egg-problem in a way: do you need to have the Technology Mechanism first, or the financing? Currently what needs to be shown is that the Technology Mechanism is a good place to invest climate finance.</p> <p>Q3: Much technology development is taking place in the private sector. How do the speakers see the links between the Technology Mechanism and the private sector? – John: the private sector is explicitly involved in the TNA process, just like as many other stakeholders as possible. Ron: in R&D institutes like NREL there is much experience in working with the private sector. Heleen: private sector is not the same everywhere, and the linkages between government and knowledge actors is not always good. In many developing countries, energy companies are not privatised but state-owned.</p>	<p>Audience</p>
<p><i>Vision for the Technology Executive Committee</i></p>	
<p>The TEC is operational and about to hold its 3rd meeting. It has agreed on</p>	<p>Letha Tawney (WRI, by</p>

<p>its modalities and is constructively debating its work plan. Three concrete suggestions are given: 1) the TEC members should be ambassadors of the benefits of technology; 2) focus on innovation in developing countries, and develop innovation capacity especially in low-income countries; 3) also provide capabilities to handle the new technology needed for a low-carbon climate resilient world.</p> <p>http://cdkn.org/2012/05/a-positive-vision-for-the-unfccc-technology-executive-committee/?loclang=en_gb and http://insights.wri.org/news/2012/05/positive-vision-unfccc-technology-executive-committee</p>	<p>video)</p> <p>www.wri.org</p>
<p><i>Discussion by TEC, observers and audience</i></p>	
<p>The progress on the Technology Mechanism has been steady, and that is exciting. The TEC mandate is broad, which gives scope for many interesting activities. A concrete suggestion would be that the TEC launch a consultation process and invite submissions which could yield useful inputs for its future work . Seeking to foster greater engagement of developing country stakeholders, ICTSD has invited researchers from Africa and India to write a series of think pieces about the way forward for the Technology Mechanism which will be published before the 3rd TEC meeting . In general, the TEC can play a valuable role as a guidance body for policies and best practices. It is not clear how the TEC involves publicly-funded research centres in its work. Finally, it is difficult to conceive that the IPRs are entirely ignored in the work of the TEC. The TEC could do useful technical work on this issue beyond the polarization that has characterized discussions on it in the climate change context.</p> <p>The TEC as an ambassador is a good analogy. An ambassador represents a certain country and makes sure its interests are taken into account, it also advertises the country. The TEC could function as an ambassador of technology by pulling all the information together and packaging it for the parties in the UNFCCC. The audience of the TEC should be the parties. The TEC could perhaps function like the Technical and Economic Assessment Panel (TEAP) in the Montreal Protocol.</p> <p>The TEC certainly has ambition, but also limitations. Its mandate is to advise the COP. It plans to commission papers and do additional work, such as roadmaps or readiness assessments like what IRENA is doing. The TEC is engaging with its audience, and it is already engaging stakeholders in its meetings. It will be holding thematic dialogues, study market barriers and enabling environments, and will produce technical paper on the institutional linkages to other bodies.</p>	<p>Ahmed Abdel Latif (ICTSD) www.ictsd.org</p> <p>Mark Radka (UNEP) www.unep.org</p> <p>Matt Kennedy (Ireland)</p>
<p>Q4: The GCF indeed needs to handle technology but is not necessarily suited. It could ask the TEC for advice. The TEC members could start liaising with the GCF board members to figure any problems out early on.</p> <p>Q5: The submission is an interesting idea, especially as it is not easy to get observers from developing countries to attend TEC meetings.</p>	<p>Audience</p>