

CIERP

THE CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL
ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCE POLICY



Climate Policy Lab Concept Paper | Nov 2016

As climate change policy enters the post-Paris era, national policymakers around the world will need to understand which policies work in practice, which don't, and why. The Climate Policy Lab (CPL) will convene teams of scholars and practitioners to evaluate existing climate policies empirically and work with to governments contemplating new climate policies.

The main questions the Lab seeks to answer are: Which climate policies work in practice? Which don't work? Why? Under what conditions would they work elsewhere? The scope of the Lab will be global, with a particular emphasis on comparative analysis.

The Lab will consist of a network of scholars and policymakers from each focus country and region, which will allow it to be responsive to policy needs and to be academically rigorous. The products will include easily accessible publications, scholarly journal papers, policy briefings, workshops, and trainings, all designed to facilitate two-way communication between scholars and practitioners. The papers will be available in formats and languages that are useful for policymakers around the world.

Much of the scholarship on climate change policy is theoretical, not empirical. Extensive literature now exists about the merits of price versus quantity instruments, for example, but much less exists evaluating the actual implementation of these policies. Similar critiques can be made of the resilience literature, which tends to be either very theoretical or consisting of isolated case studies that don't advance more generalized knowledge. The CPL will be mindful of relevant theory, but emphasize assessment of actual climate policies.

The scope of the Lab will also be distinct. The Lab will be highly attuned to state, national, and bi-lateral policy processes while maintaining a global perspective -- the motto of The Fletcher School. In addition, we will focus on multilateral organizations, such as UN agencies, the Major Economies Forum and development banks. This will allow the lab to be nimble and responsive to changes in the policy environment, and not driven by the use and refinement of a specific model.

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Short-List of Initial Projects of the Climate Policy Lab

The research projects of the Climate Policy Lab fit into five buckets: (1) State of Climate Policy report, (2) Climate Policy Design and Assessment, (3) Innovation, (4) Finance, and (5) International Policy. In this Annex, a short list of initial projects is listed. For a comprehensive list of potential projects, please see Appendix D.

1. State of Climate Policy Report: A flagship product for the Lab, which will survey the status of climate policies across the world

Climate policy performance index: A global index on the performance of national (and subnational?) climate policies could help guide climate investments, identify gaps in climate policy, assist in identification of best practices, and aid comparative research.

Content analysis of Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs): With the new INDCs submitted for Paris, there is an opportunity to engage in rich cross-country analysis. This project will use the INDCs to examine current practices and variation in a wide range of thematic topics, including adaptation strategies, non-fossil targets, financing strategies, SLCPs.

2. Climate Policy - Design, Implementation and Assessment

Synergies and trade-offs between mitigation, adaptation, and resilience: The promise of synergistic policies for mitigation and adaptation are quite high, particularly in the agricultural sector, but some choices may include trade-offs. Using case studies, this study will identify the specific instances of these synergies and trade-offs and associated policy choices. .

Carbon pricing: Many theoretical studies exist about the benefits of carbon pricing and market-based mechanisms. Now that 74 countries have embraced the Carbon Pricing Leadership Coalition, empirical studies are needed on the effectiveness of different carbon pricing strategies in practice.

Power sector climate policies: The United States is proceeding with a regulatory approach. China is proceeding with a cap-and-trade system. What complementary, backstop policies could support these two approaches? What would be the synergistic effect of multiple policies on the power sector in both countries?

Non-fossil energy targets: Several countries have made non-fossil energy commitments as part of their INDCs. What are the best strategies for implementing non-fossil targets? How does energy efficiency fit into the nuclear-hydro-renewable mix?

Comparative study of climate policy process in the United States and China: Why do we observe different policy choices and outcomes in the United States and China? Is the answer based on policy process, institutions, prior experience or something else?

3. Innovation, Technology Transfer and Government Policy

Energy innovation in major emerging economies: What contributions are major emerging economies making to low-carbon innovation? This project will collect and analyze innovation indicators from developing countries. Which indicators are available, and which indicators are needed to compare innovation capabilities in clean technologies between developed and developing countries?

Innovation systems for resilience: Innovation is central to adaptation, but innovation systems in many developing countries are weakly developed. Based on emerging literature and new case studies in Honduras and Ethiopia, what do we know about effective innovation policy for resilience?