



Workshop: Religious and Spiritual Perspectives on Climate Engineering

**Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies
April 24 – 26, 2013
Potsdam, Germany**

Call for Abstracts

Technologies capable of significantly and purposefully intervening in the global climate system, collectively referred to as climate engineering technologies, are increasingly gaining attention in political, academic, and societal discourse. Various climate engineering technologies have been proposed with the hopes that they might alleviate some of the worst effects of climate change, either by reducing atmospheric CO₂ concentrations or by increasing the reflection of sunlight back into space. However, precisely those technologies that are capable of quickly and significantly influencing global mean temperatures are also associated with particularly large uncertainties and risks. This includes effects on the biophysical environment, such as uncertain and unequally distributed regional effects on weather, climate and ecosystems, as well as effects on social and political systems, such as increased or new conflict potentials between states and overly negative effects on current and future emission reduction efforts. Beyond these technical and socio-political aspects, climate engineering also poses other difficult questions that set it even further apart from mitigation or adaptation. At the most basic level, climate engineering places the entire relationship between humanity and the environment as it has traditionally been understood into question – indeed, in popular media the application of climate engineering has occasionally been compared to “playing God”.

In this context, we are convening a scientific workshop that addresses how climate engineering can be conceptualized within different religious and spiritual framings and worldviews. This builds on previous workshops aimed at understanding the more basic relationship between inadvertent climate change and religions, as well as current work being done on climate engineering at the IASS. How do different religious and spiritual thought traditions frame the human-environment relationship, and how does climate engineering fit into or challenge this? How do these traditions weigh the potential alleviation of current and future suffering through climate change against the risks and uncertainties of climate engineering? Are statements possible concerning the acceptability or unacceptability of climate engineering within individual religious and spiritual traditions? And can these insights lead to more effective communication of these messages within the various religious and spiritual communities?

We seek contributions in the form of 15–20 minute statements / presentations that can then be further developed into manuscripts for book chapters, based on feedback from the workshop and the ideas developed there. Please submit a brief abstract of your planned presentation (max. 1 page) to Stefan Schäfer (stefan.schaefer@iass-potsdam.de).

The workshop will be held at the IASS in Potsdam, Germany, 24-26 April 2013. Please indicate your interest in participating as early as possible. Abstracts for presentations are due on Friday, March 15, 2013. The IASS will be able to provide limited funding for travel and accommodation costs. Please specify to Stefan Schäfer whether you require funding from the IASS.

The workshop conveners are:

Stefan Schäfer (Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies, Potsdam)
PD Dr. Mark Lawrence (Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies, Potsdam)
Achim Maas (Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies, Potsdam)
Dr. Dieter Gerten (Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research)