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**Institutional Dimensions
of Global Environmental
Change (IDGEC)**

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THE INTERNATIONAL PROJECT OFFICE IS UP AND RUNNING

IDGEC's International Project Office (IPO) is up and running in Hanover, New Hampshire. Our goal is to catalyze and coordinate research among networks of scientists who are working on different aspects of global environmental issues. Since our debut in September 1999, our network has grown to include more than 150 people. We think this points to the importance of our substantive research projects, as well as to IDGEC's attractiveness as a vehicle to bring scholars, policy makers, and other interested individuals together in a large-scale, international research project.

IDGEC's Executive Director, Virginia Walsh, is a professor of political science at Rutgers University. Our staff includes Chrystel Buell, Editorial and Administrative assistant, and Kay McCabe, Grants Coordinator.

Thank you for your interest in our project!

(Please see staff photo, below)



The IPO Team (from left): Virginia Walsh, Chrystel Buell, and Kay McCabe. The dog's name is Brinka. (Photo by Deborah Robinson)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS IDGEC?

Institutional Dimensions of Global Environmental Change (IDGEC) is a large-scale, international research project on social institutions and the global environment.

WHAT ARE FLAGSHIPS ?

IDGEC's core research projects, aka flagships, are focused on climate change, threats to boreal and tropical forests, and ocean governance

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

Many researchers find IDGEC an attractive vehicle to coordinate their research with that of colleagues around the world.

IDGEC: A Large-Scale, International Science Project

Why does the "tragedy of the commons" afflict the harvesters of some stocks of fish, while others succeed in devising regimes or management systems that allow them to use these resources sustainably over long periods of time? What are the prospects that the international regime dealing with climate change, as articulated in the 1992 Framework Convention on Climate Change and the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, will succeed in meeting its goal of stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations in the Earth's atmosphere at a level that prevents dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system?

These are the sorts of questions that IDGEC addresses from a variety of perspectives. IDGEC's research priorities form a hierarchical sequence that moves from broadly theoretical to more applied concerns by addressing matters of (1) causality – how much of the variance in the condition of ecosystems is attributable to the effects of institutions? (2) effectiveness – why are some institutional responses to environmental problems more successful than others? and (3) design – how can we structure institutions to enhance their performance? The project pays particular attention to questions relating to the fit between institutions and ecosystems; interplay between distinct institutions, and the prospects for scaling up/down findings relating to institutions operating at different levels of social organization. In the process, IDGEC seeks to foster a constructive dialogue between social scientists pursuing a general interest in institutions and researchers working on solutions to specific environmental problems and to build bridges between those working in different scientific traditions (e.g. collective-action models versus social-practice models of institutions).



IDGEC Upcoming Events:

May 29–30, 2000

Tokyo, Japan
Carbon Management Research Activity,
Research Workshop

June 3, 2000

Bloomington, Indiana
International Association for the Study of
Common Property, Biennial Conference
1:30 - 3:30 PM, Presentation of IDGEC Flagship
Projects

June 16–18, 2000

Oslo, Norway
Meeting of IDGEC's Scientific Steering
Committee

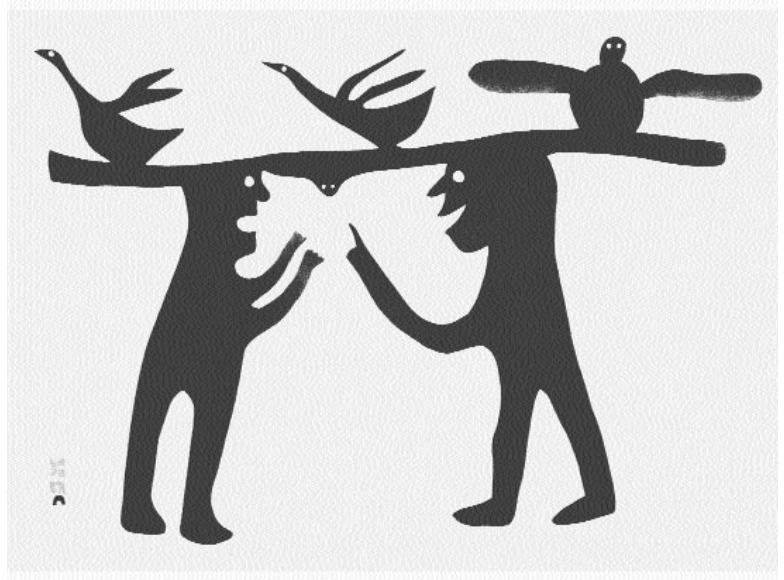
IDGEC Promotes North/South Research Collaborations

Many conversations about global environmental cooperation emphasize the differences in political and scientific research agendas between developing countries ("the South") and industrialized countries ("the North"). For example, policy makers and scientists in the North tend to be concerned with large-scale issues such as climate change, while many in the South focus on more local concerns such as safe drinking water and feeding growing human populations. While these differences may create a difficult landscape for environmental diplomats, they open rich intellectual terrain for IDGEC's scientists.

Scoping Reports Update: Onward from Chiang-Mai

Two teams of IDGEC researchers met in Chiang Mai, Thailand, on January 17-18, 2000, to finalize scoping reports and to clear a path to active research projects. The Carbon Management Research Activity (CMRA) team, together with the Boreal and Tropical Forests team, met to outline research frameworks and the most pressing research questions. Participants included Merrilyn Wasson of the Australian National University; Yoshiki Yamagata of Japan's National Institute of Environmental Studies; Suparb Pas-ong of Walailak University, Thailand; Louis Lebel of Chiang Mai University, Thailand; Antonio Contreras of the College of Forestry and Natural Resources, Los Banos College, Philippines; and Granville Sewell of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

In a separate but parallel development, Alf Håkon Hoel of the University of Tromsø, Norway finalized the scoping report on the Performance of Exclusive Economic Zones (PEEZ) in early March. The Norwegian National Research Council has awarded the PEEZ team a grant to help fund its workshop. The full PEEZ Scoping Report will be available in the next few weeks. A working draft is now posted on our web site.



From The Inuit Print, National Museum of Man, Ottawa, Canada. (Reprinted With Permission).

With the scoping reports at or near completion, participants in the Chiang Mai meeting agreed that the next step should be to hold follow-up workshops for researchers.

Dr. Yamagata agreed to host the CMRA workshop, which will be held May 29 – 30 at the Tokyo Bay Intercontinental Hotel. The Forests and PEEZ teams plan to hold their workshops in the summer or fall of 2000.

Many thanks to Granville Sewell, who helped to draft this article.

View the full texts of the scoping reports on
<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~idgec>

The Flagship Teams. The scoping reports were drafted with input and commentary from a number of people, in addition to those listed below. Many thanks to all who assisted us!

CMRA

Yoshiki Yamagata
 Merrilyn Wasson
 Granville Sewell

Forests

Suparb Pas-ong
 Antonio Contreras
 Louis Lebel

PEEZ

Alf Håkon Hoel
 Elena Andreeva
 Russell Reichelt
 Virginia Walsh

fit

How well do the institutions in question match the ecosystems with which they interact?

interplay

How do distinct institutional arrangements affect each other?

scale

Do lessons learned about local institutions apply to global institutions, and vice versa?

North/South *(continued from page 2)*

Bringing together researchers from the North and South, IDGEC is exploring the institutional dimensions of threats to the global climate, to tropical and boreal forests, and to marine biodiversity. Many of our research questions relate to the problems of fit, interplay, and scale (see boxes, left) within and across regions. As we move from planning to active research, each flagship is holding a workshop. These events will help researchers to activate international, collaborative research projects.

Our research teams invite participation from scientists around the world. At the same time, IDGEC's SSC has selected the Circumpolar North and Southeast Asia as priority areas. Major environmental threats, such as climate change, deforestation, and overexploitation of fisheries, are common to both regions. There is substantial variation in national and local institutions, language, and culture across these regions. This institutional diversity -- in the context of global environmental threats - offers exciting opportunities for comparative research. According to Suparb Pas-ong, an IDGEC SSC member at Walailak University in Thailand, "Ethnic and cultural differences are ...positive features of both regions. Indigenous people of both regions have their own ways of interacting with natural resources. These should provide excellent opportunities for...comparative studies of different ways in which human beings and their institutions interact with different ecosystems..." Alf Håkon Hoel, of the University of Tromsø, suggests that IDGEC is well positioned to develop joint projects with groups such as the International Arctic Science Committee.

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