Workshop
Domestic Carbon Initiatives in Europe
Experience and Opportunities
Carbon Offset

The idea of offsetting emissions of carbon dioxide (CO2) and other greenhouse gases is a way forward in climate protection. The idea is as innovative as it is controversial and the challenges of climate change call for a wide range of measures. This article will provide background information on voluntary offsetting.

- What is voluntary offsetting?
- How does it work?
- Certified and verified emission reductions
- Criticism of voluntary offsetting

What is voluntary offsetting?
Voluntary offsetting is a way of compensating for greenhouse gas emissions from certain emission-intensive activities that cannot be avoided. The party that causes the greenhouse gas emissions by its activities funds activities that lead to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions elsewhere. This could be done, for example, by co-funding the erection of a wind power station in a developing country. Alternatively, the polluter could create carbon sinks, e.g., by planting woodland. The growing trees will absorb carbon dioxide (CO2) and bind it – usually for several decades.
Some highlights of the German market for voluntary offsetting

- The German market is stable and growing
- Sound standards dominate the market
- There is still a big potential in Germany
- Offsetting doesn’t replace activities to protect the climate
- Nearly 50 % of the buyers in Germany want domestic projects
Voluntary Offsetting by government in Germany

- 2007 Cabinet decision
  Carbon offset for official trips made by Federal Government members

- 2010 Budget Committee
  End of compensation from 2010 on

- 2015 Cabinet Decision
  Restart carbon offset for official trips made by Federal Government members

- 2014 Decision of the Federal Environment Agency’s management
  Compensation of all events of the Federal Environment Agency
Limited domestic offsetting

- The Kyoto protocol reduces the range for national projects close to zero, because of the double claiming. Currently only rewetting of peatlands is eligible.

- Today we will identify opportunities and discuss how to solve the problem.

- To reach the 2°C target all possible efforts – voluntary and mandatory – are needed.
Advantages of domestic projects

- Achieve emission reductions in sectors and by entities not addressed by the EU ETS
- Foster innovation
- Deliver co-benefits for the region
- Bring forward voluntary methods as blueprint for compliance markets
Thank you for your attention!

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