



ETC Group
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Hose down!

ETC Group calls on UK government to halt Geoengineering Experiment

In response to reports that British scientists are about to test the hardware needed to put sulphur particles in the stratosphere as a climate technofix, international technology watchdog ETC Group is calling on the UK government to halt the controversial test and respect UN processes underway to discuss these issues.

Scientists at Cambridge University (collaborating with Oxford and the Hadley Centre in a project run by the University of Bristol) have been engineering a hose to the sky that will be held up by a giant balloon. The purpose of the hose is to deliver particles to the stratosphere as a way of blocking sunlight, in order to disguise the effects of global warming. The test, expected to take place in October or November, will use a large helium balloon to loft a kilometer-long prototype hose to the sky and then spray water through the hose (a substitute for the chemicals it is ultimately designed to deliver). The experiment is part of a £1.6 million research project entitled [SPICE \(Stratospheric Particle Injection for Climate Engineering\), funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council](#). The SPICE researchers have not disclosed exactly where or when the controversial experiment will take place.

“Going ahead with this experiment will do real damage to the UK’s – and Europe’s -- credibility in climate negotiations later this year in Durban, as well as [next year’s Earth Summit](#) in Rio de Janeiro,” said Pat Mooney, Executive Director of ETC Group from Ottawa. “By allowing this experiment to go forward the UK is undermining intergovernmental discussions on geoengineering that it has financially supported and is very actively participating in. This extremely unhelpful provocation will sour UN negotiations. The UK Government must halt this experiment now and clearly state that it will not support any geoengineering experiments while international talks are ongoing. I will be raising these issues with governments, Parliamentarians and civil society groups next week in Bonn and Brussels in our discussions to prepare for Rio2012.”

There are many reasons why this experiment should not be allowed to proceed:

- There has been no decision to go forward with “solar radiation management” and therefore there is no need to test the hardware designed to implement it.
- The Convention on Biological Diversity adopted [a moratorium](#) on geoengineering activities last year in Nagoya, Japan and this experiment goes against the spirit, if not the letter, of that decision.
- There has been no transparency on the part of the researchers involved as shown by their failure to disclose the location, timing or the basic scientific background on the test.
- While it may seem innocuous to shoot seawater through a hose, the plan is to be able to deliver an estimated [10 million tonnes](#) of aerosols to the stratosphere – 20 kilometers above Earth. This experiment is only phase one of a much bigger plan that could have devastating consequences including large changes in weather patterns such as deadly droughts.

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For more background, see:

- ETC Group, [Geopiracy: The Case Against Geoengineering](#), 2010
- ETC Group, [“Top-down Planet Hackers call for Bottom-up Governance”](#), February 11, 2010
- Understanding Risk Research Group, Cardiff University, [Public Engagement on Geoengineering Research: Preliminary Report on the SPICE Deliberative Workshops](#), August 2011.
- John Vidal, [Giant Pump and Balloon to Pump Water into Sky in Climate Experiment](#), 31 August 2011.
- International campaign against geoengineering experiments:
www.handsoffmotherearth.org

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About ETC Group

ETC Group is an international civil society organization. We address the global socioeconomic and ecological issues surrounding new technologies with special concern for their impact on indigenous peoples, rural communities and biodiversity. We operate at the global political level and have consultative status with several UN agencies. We work closely with other civil society organizations and social movements, especially in the Americas, Asia and Africa. We have offices in Canada, the USA, Mexico and the Philippines.