64th Asamblea General
Sociedad Interamericana de Prensa
Inter American Press Association
Sociedade Interamericana de Imprensa

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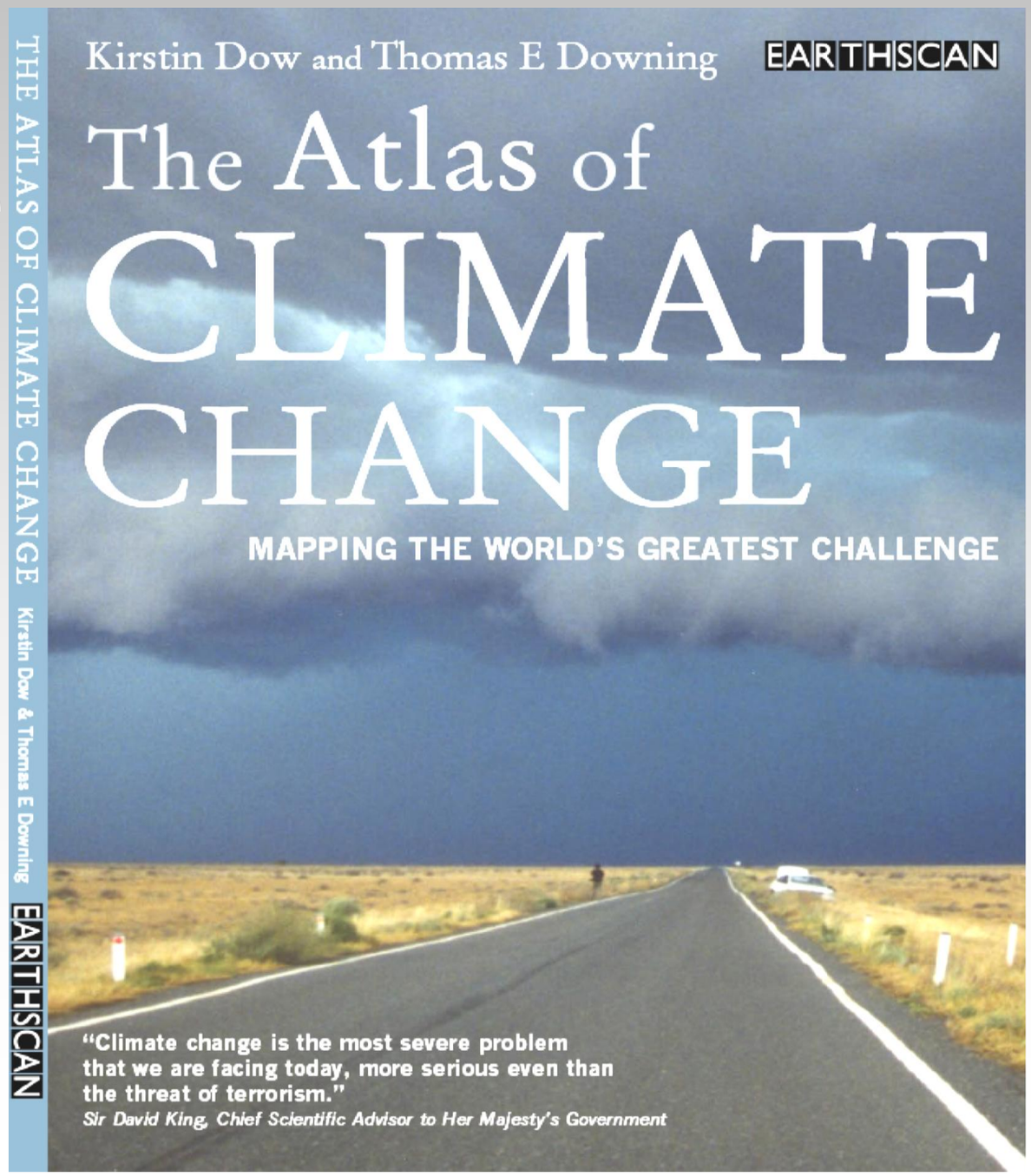
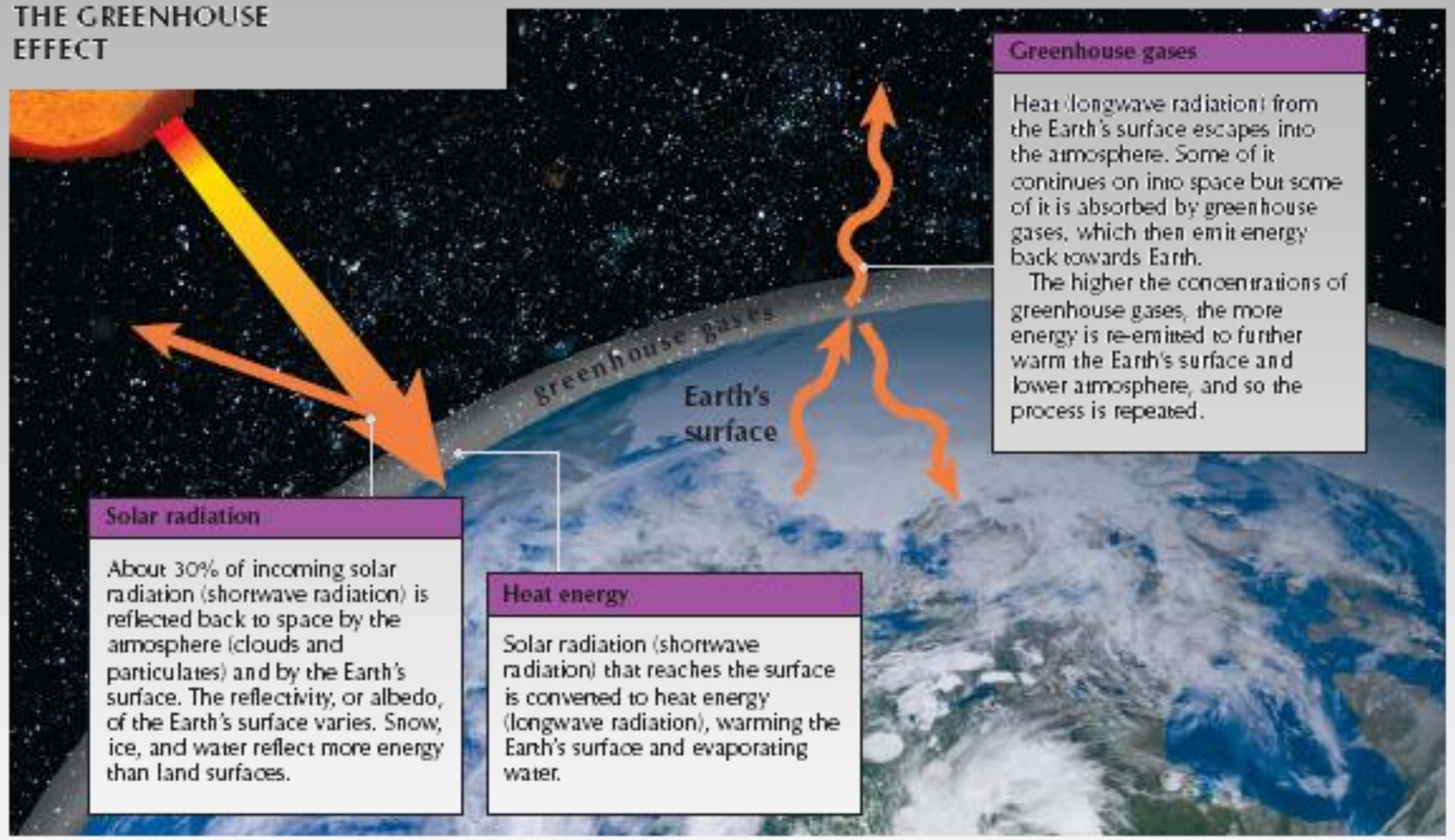
Climate Change

The press and climate change: the media's responsibility to protect the planet



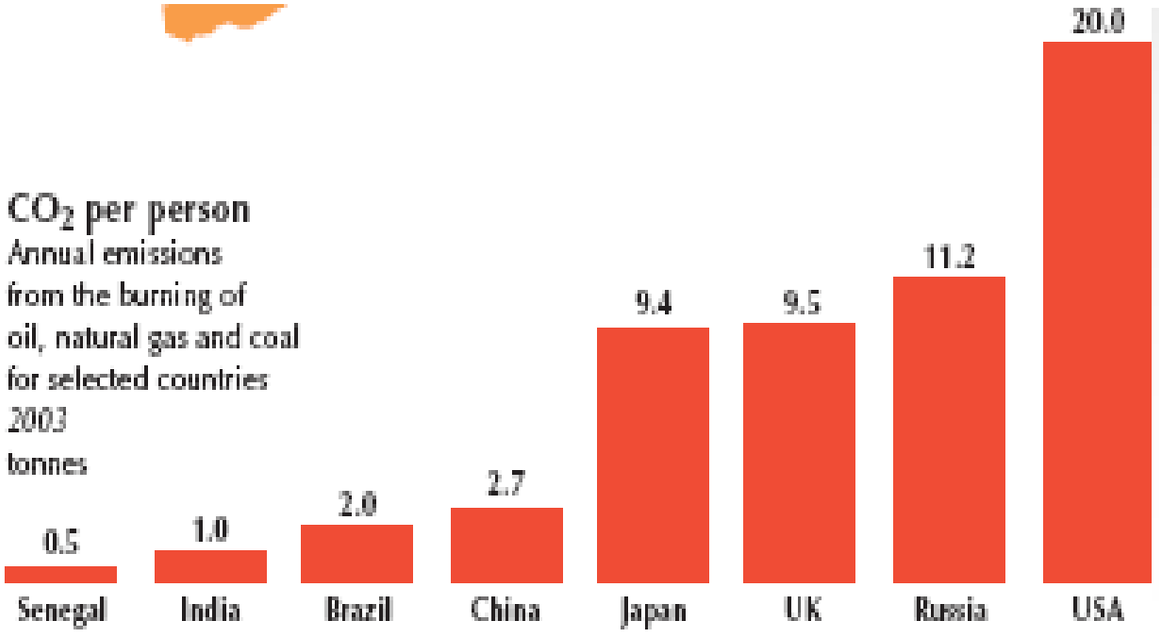
The first pillar:
The physical basis of climate change is not disputed

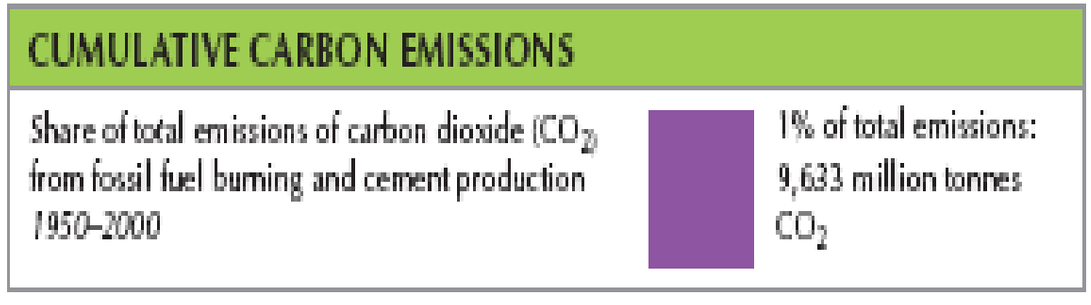


Timeline: 1898

Svante Arrherius, puts forward the theory of the greenhouse effect and calculates that doubling of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere will increase temperatures by 5°C to 6°C.

The second pillar:
We are stuffing the atmosphere with greenhouse gases

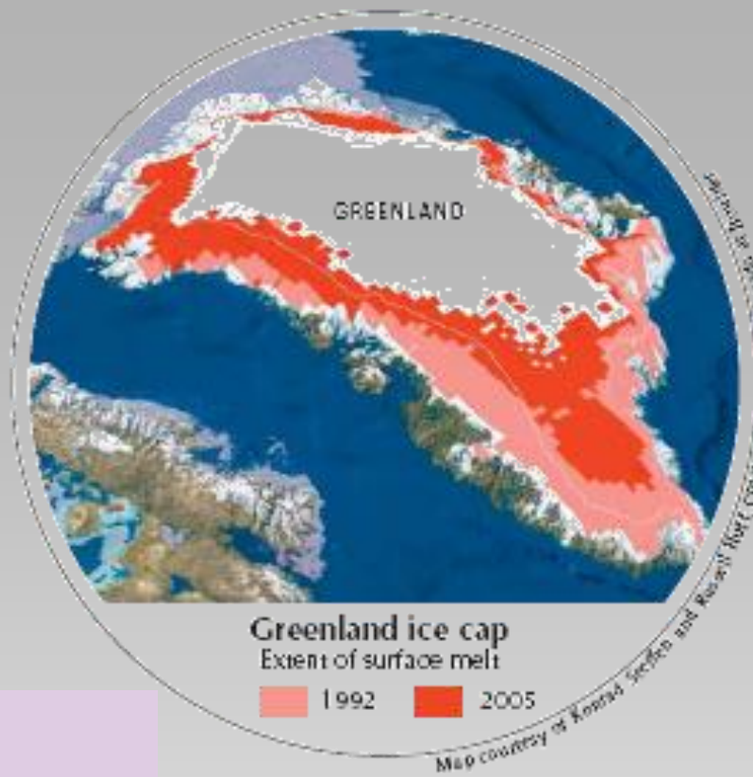


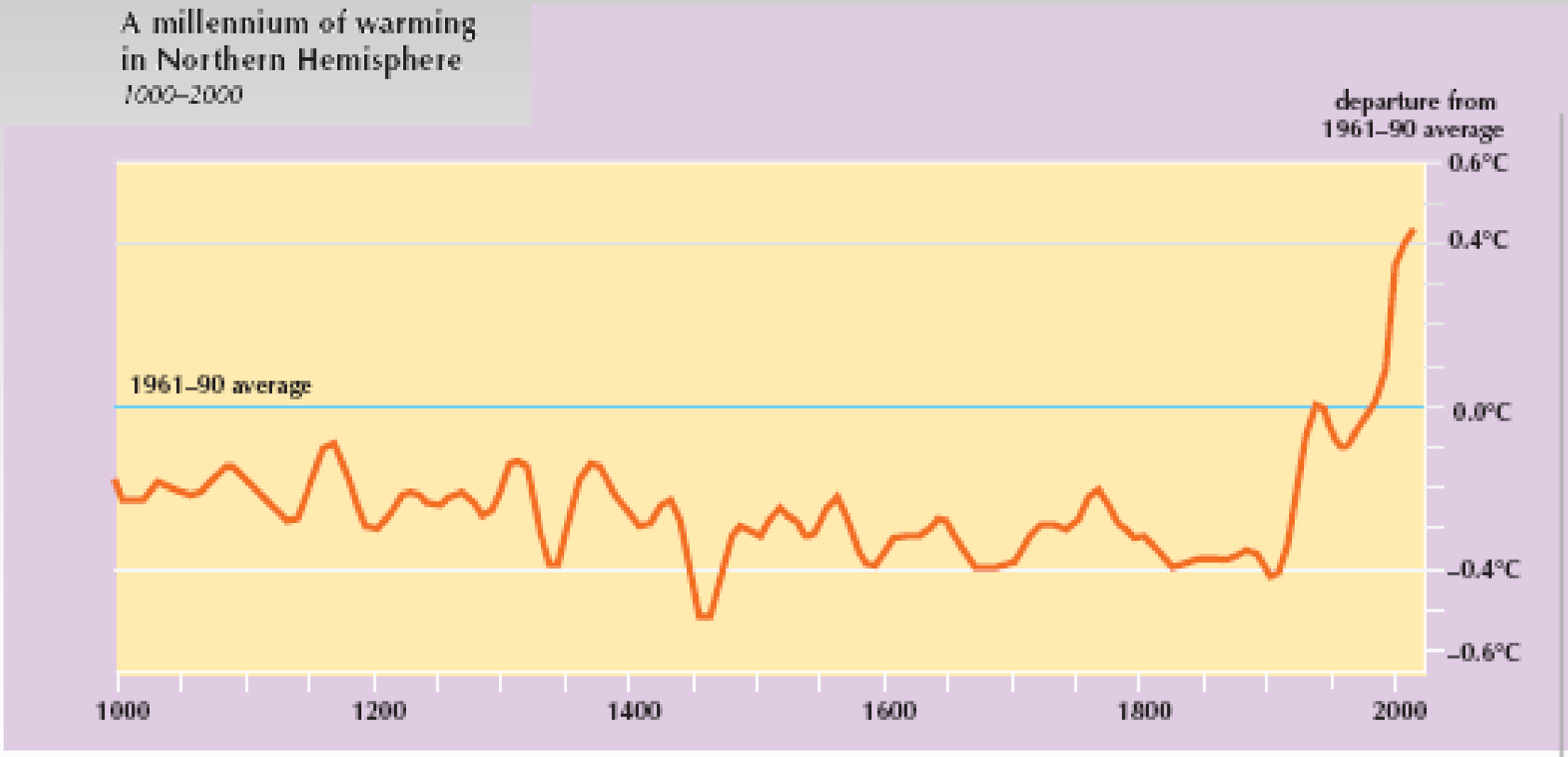


Physicists are right!

Turning on the Hadron collider last month didn’t spawn a black hole. Perhaps the physicists are right about global warming too. At least we will live to find out. Indeed we are already living in new climates around the world.

The third pillar:
The world is warmer now than it has been for 1000 years



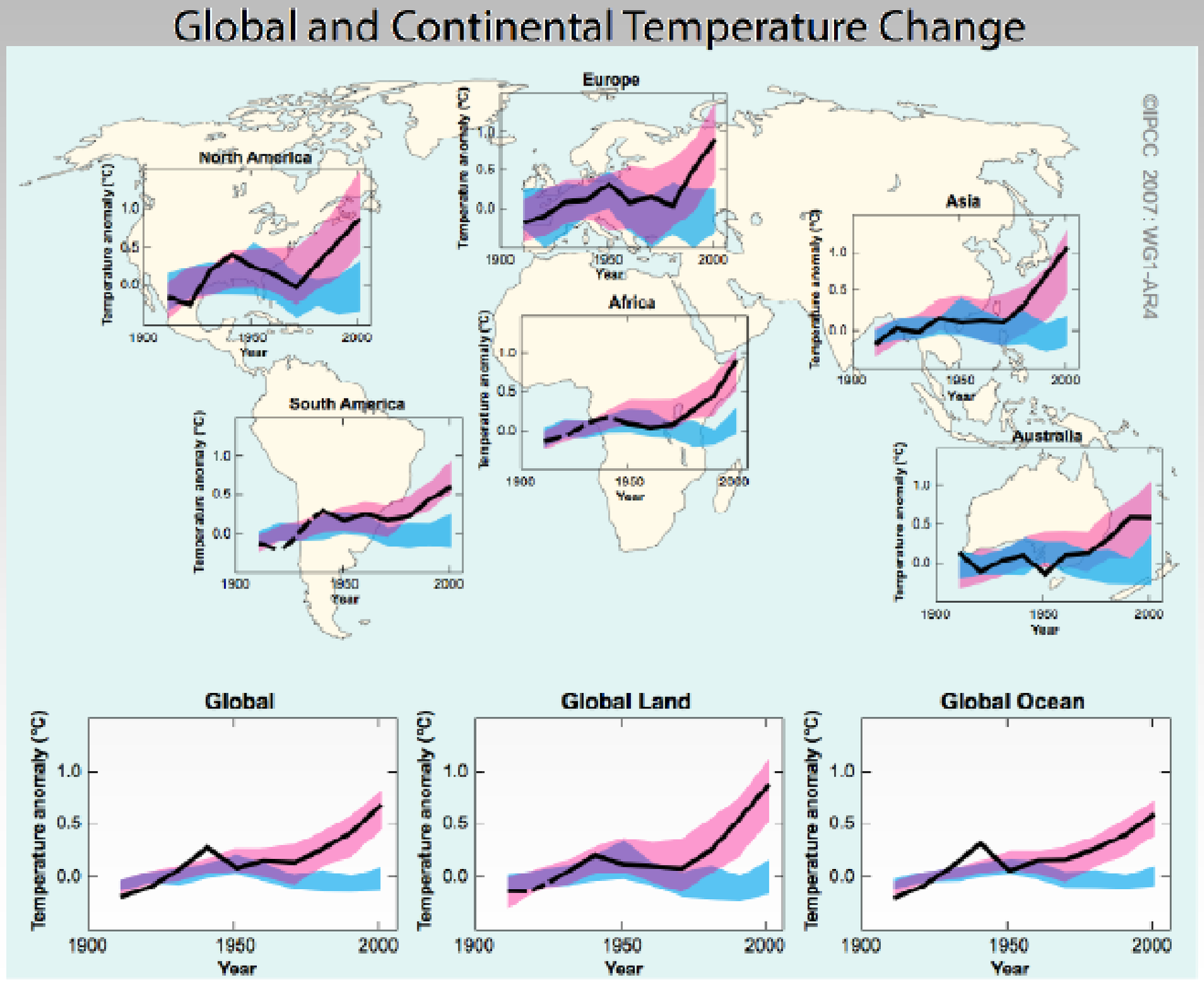


Forecast: colder times?

The chief scientist in the UK warned that the decade ahead might not repeat the warm years of the past decade due to el Niño. However, “Anyone who thinks global warming has stopped has their head in the sand.”

The fourth pillar:

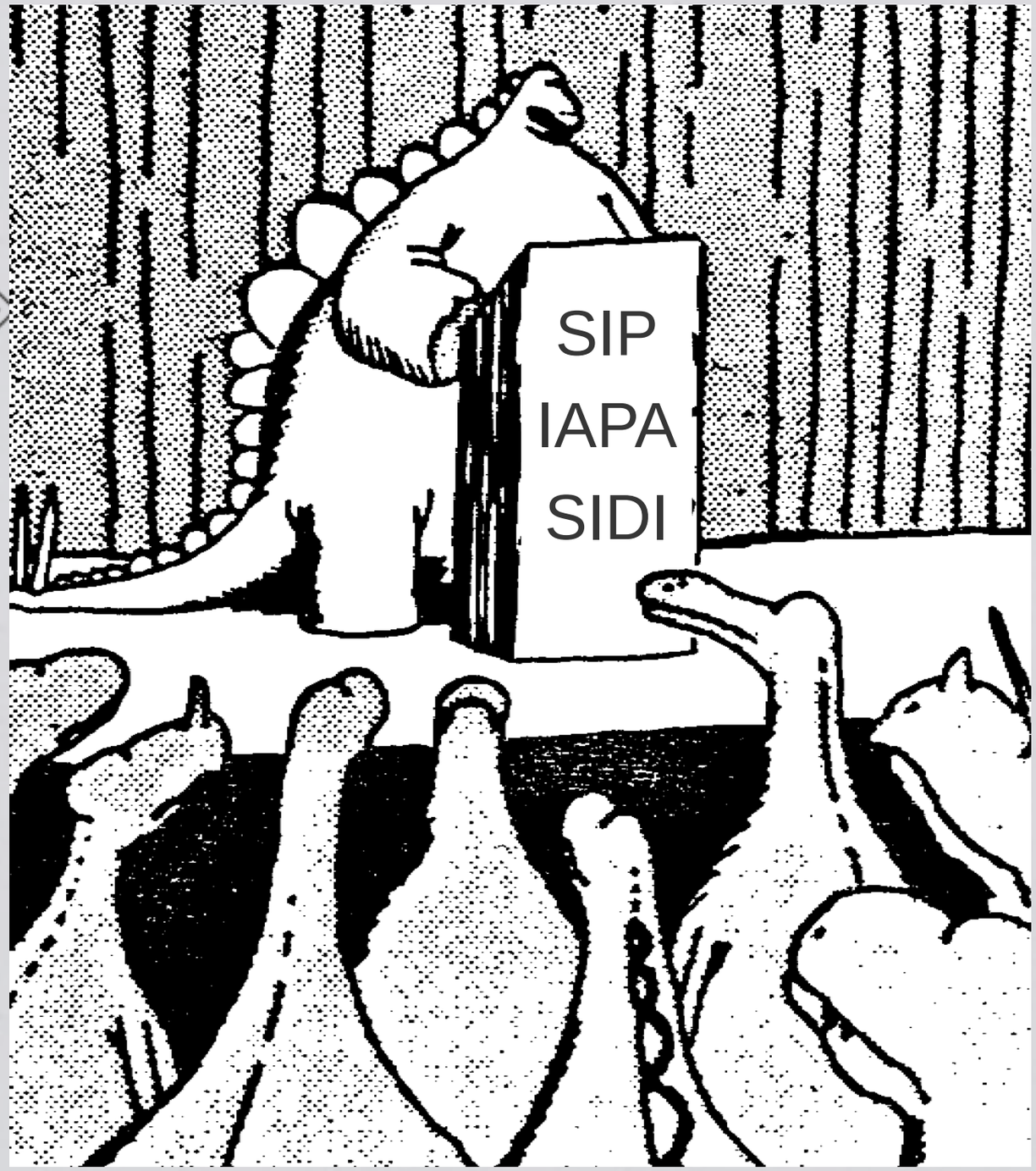
Historical changes can only be explained by including greenhouse gas emissions in global models



IPCC, SPM, 2007
www.ipcc.ch

Would you trust a computer?

The world’s fastest computers are used to forecast future climates. They are the best we have--combining thousands of scientists’ understanding of complex dynamics. Are they good enough?



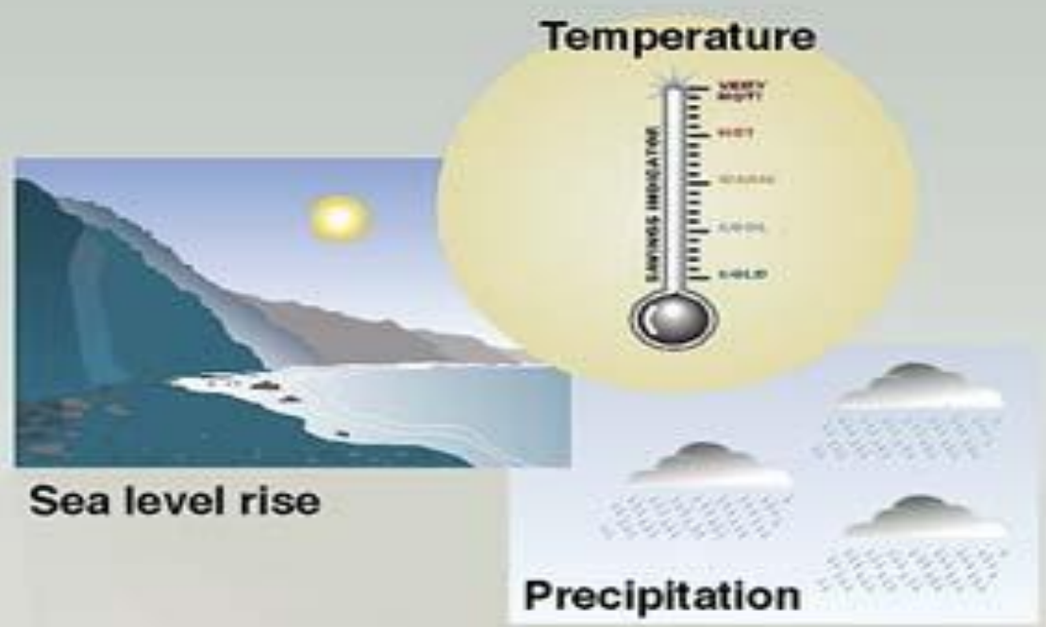
"The picture's pretty bleak, gentlemen … the world's climates are changing, the mammals are taking over, and we all have a brain about the size of a walnut."

Gary Larson, The Far Side

Science and skeptics: who's right?

Science is the testing of hypotheses, usually in the safe environment of controlled experiments. We can't really do that with the future of the planet. Skeptics criticize the scientists, often to advance a political agenda. Who is right? Who bears the consequences of being wrong? We dont't have a choice of not playing--who would you bet on?

Response option: wait and see



Health impacts

Weather-related mortality
Infectious diseases
Air-quality respiratory illnesses

Agriculture impacts

Crop yields
Irrigation demands

Forest impacts

Forest composition
Geographic range of forest
Forest health and productivity

Water resources impacts

Water supply
Water quality
Competition for water

Impacts on coastal areas

Erosion of beaches
Inundation of coastal lands
additional costs to protect coastal communities

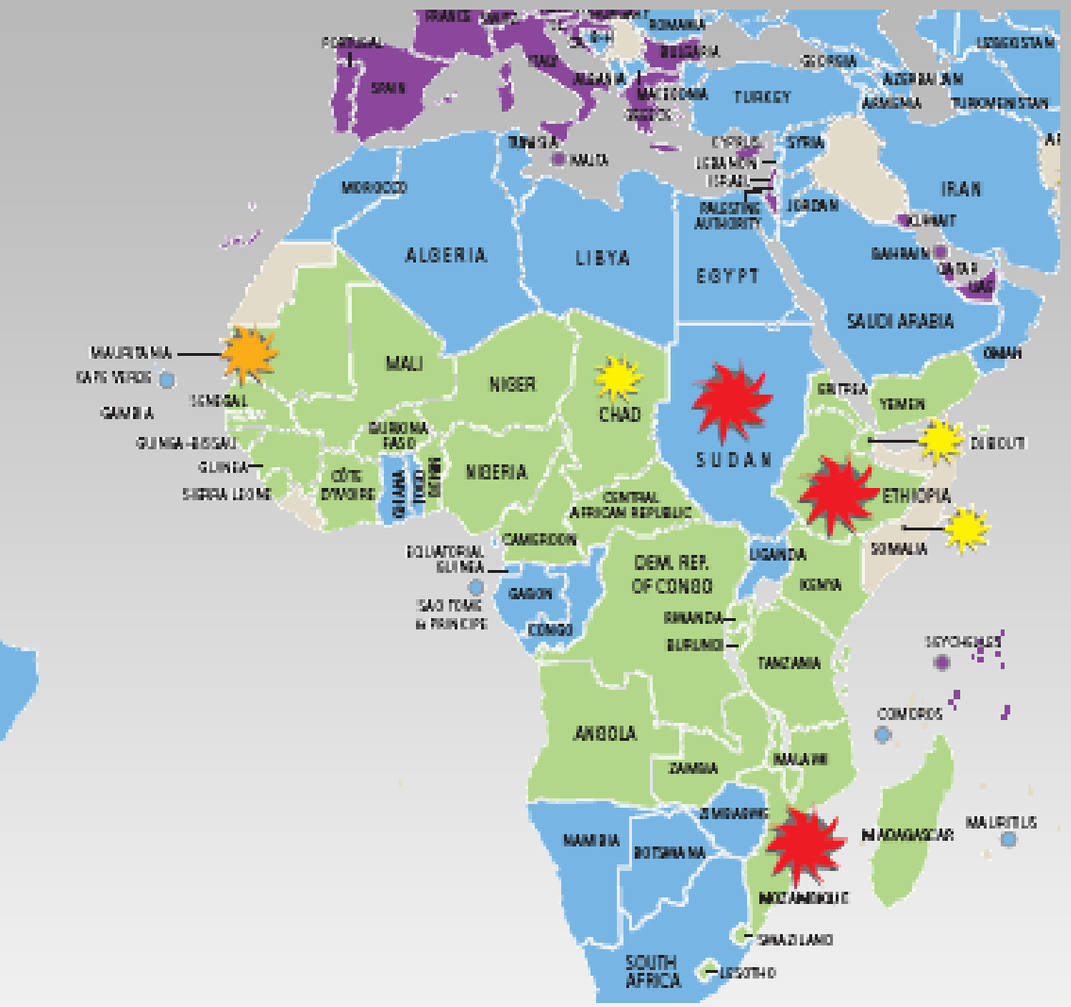
Species and natural areas

Loss of habitat and species

World fiddles while poor burn

From the Inuit losing their homes in the Arctic to landless workers dying of heat stress in the tropics, can we afford to ‘wait and see’?

Response option: local commitments



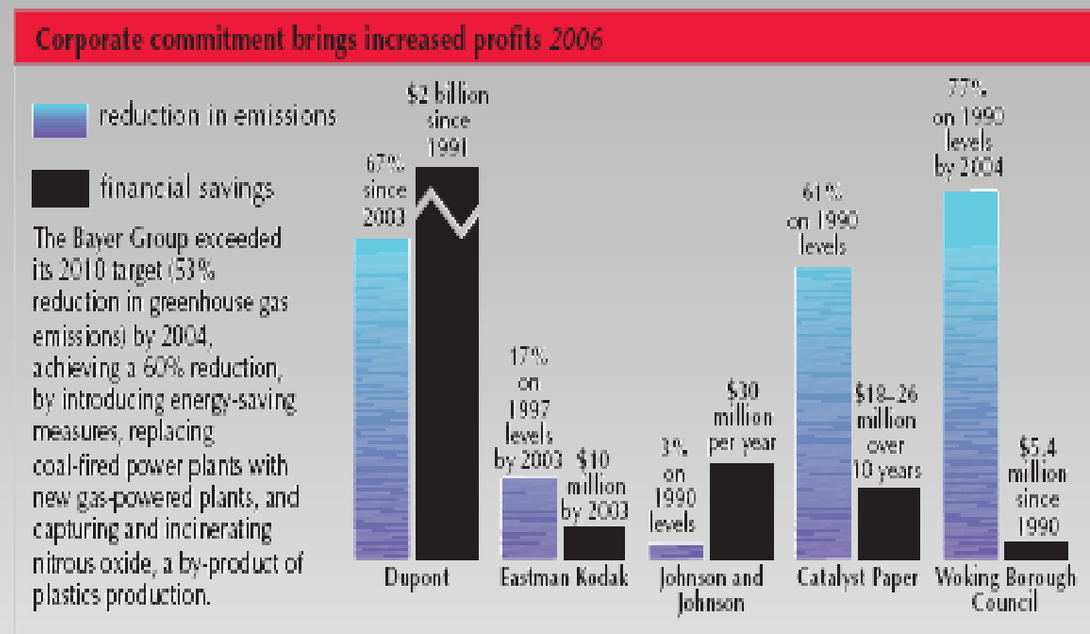
CAPACITY TO ADAPT

Human Development Index rating
2003

- high development
- medium development
- low development
- no data

Deaths from disasters
Average annual number per million population
1980–2000

- 140 – 600
- 50 – 70
- 10 – 50



CITIES COMMITTED TO CHANGE

Number of cities or local governments participating in Cities for Climate Protection
2005

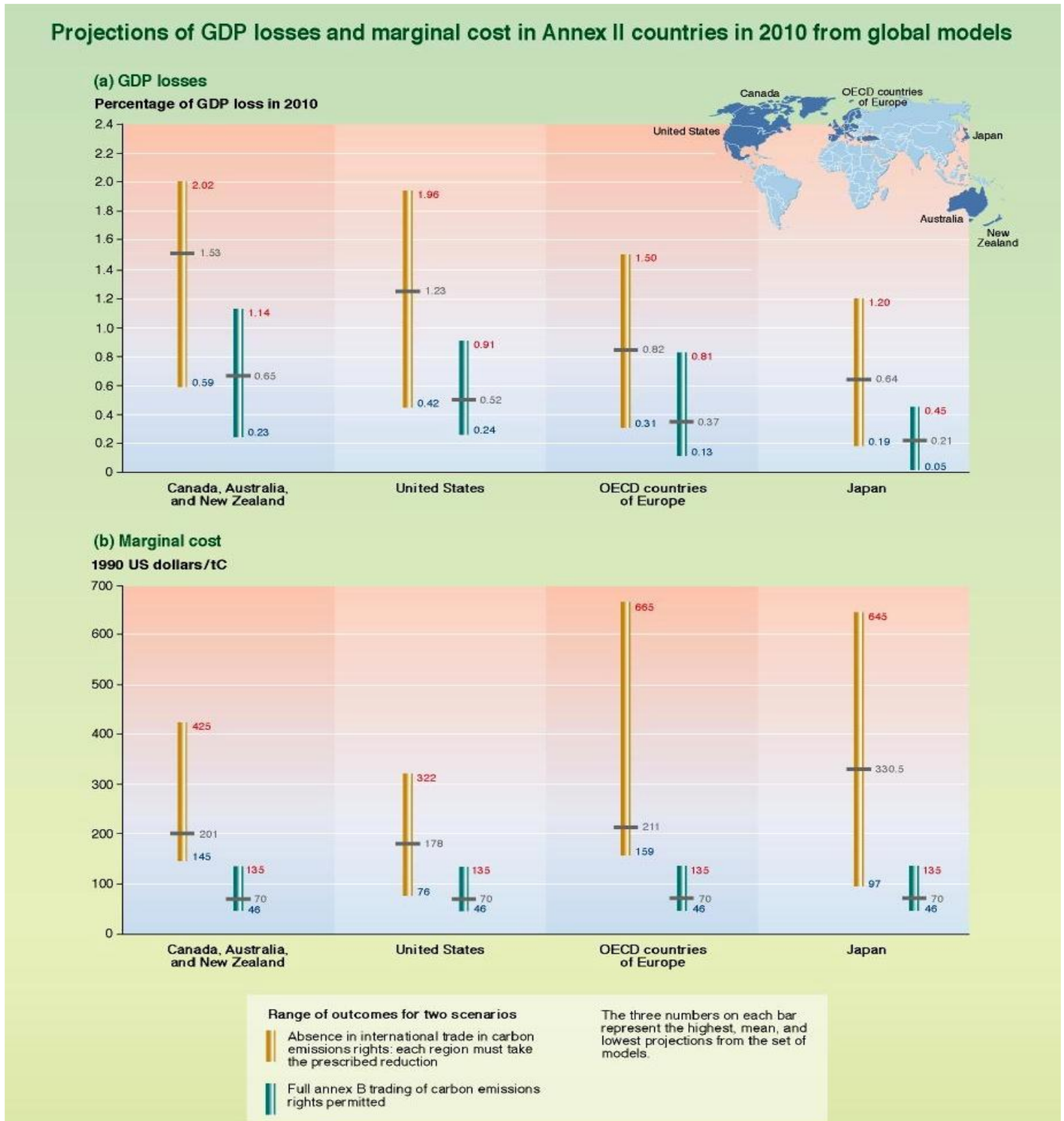
- 100 or more
- 21 – 50
- 11 – 20
- 6 – 10
- 1 – 5
- not a participant

Local leaders take action

Local community leaders, city planners and regional governments in Spain have joined forced to take action against global warming. “The time is right to move ahead” said the regional governor of Andalucia, one of the most vulnerable regions.

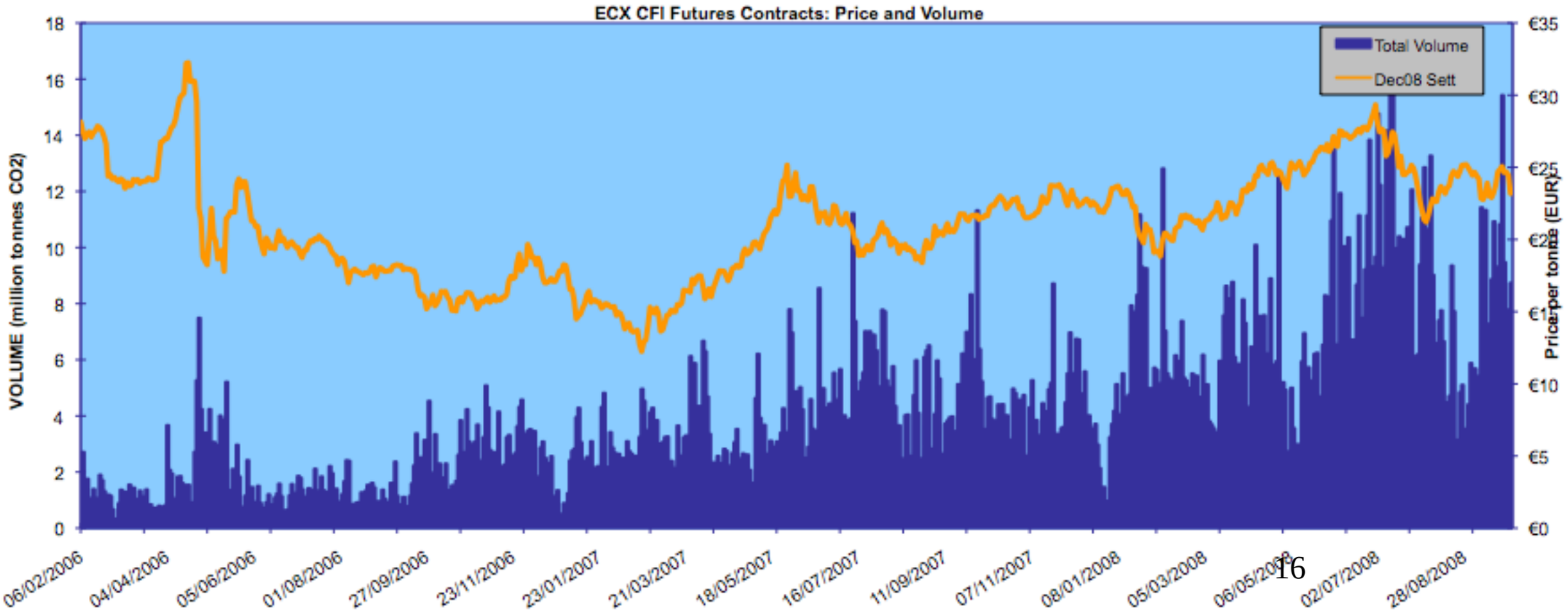
Response option: cap and trade

GDP losses and marginal costs of compliance with Kyoto targets vary across Annex II regions but can be reduced through emissions trading



Response option: cap and trade

The European Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) allows companies and organisations to trade their surplus or deficit emissions given national quotas. This sets a price for carbon, creating internal incentives for reducing emissions through technology and management.



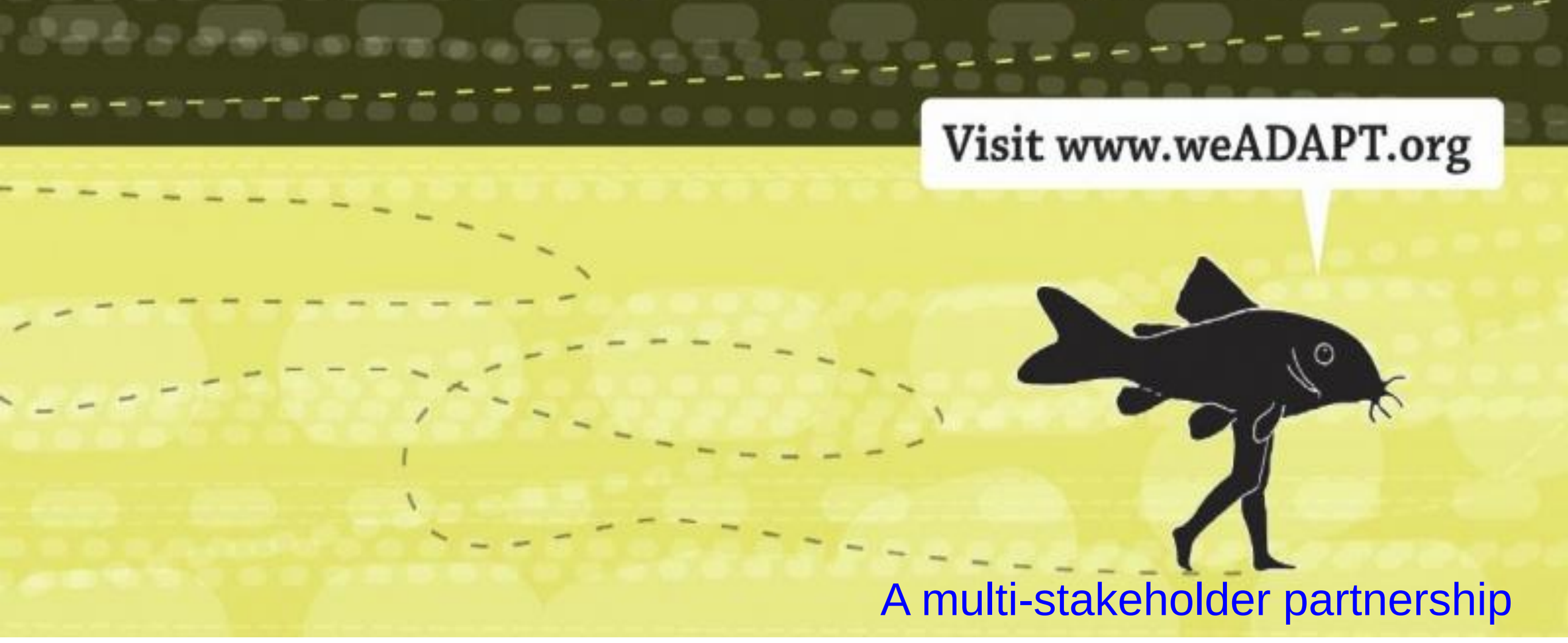
Carbon-free on the cheap?

Cap and trade. Does it really reduce total emissions? Or, is it a ‘get out cheap’ clause for big business? See our exclusive coverage of the run-up to the UN conference of parties meeting in Poland in December.

Response option: Adapt to expected impacts

weADAPT

Collaborating on Climate Adaptation

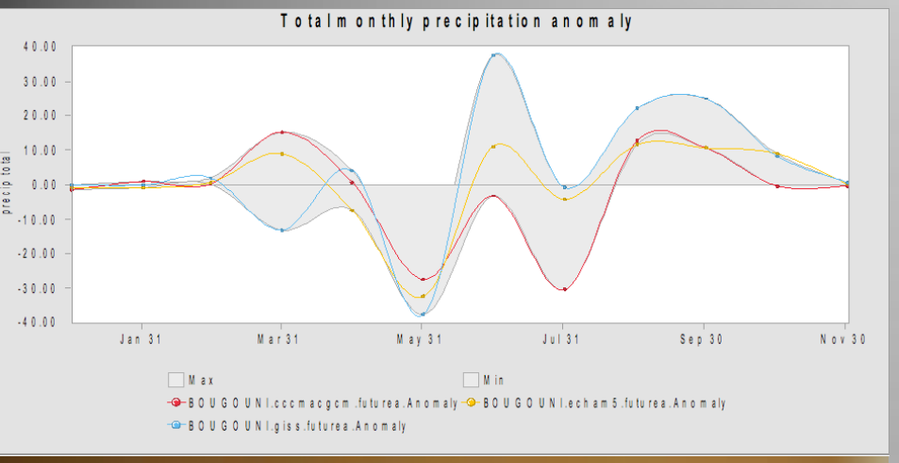


A multi-stakeholder partnership

Adapt now!

The UN estimates the cost of climate adaptation to be some 5% of GDP if we act now. However, delaying significant investment in climate protection will raise the cost. If we don’t stabilize greenhouse gas emissions, we won’t be able to adapt, even at high costs.

www.weADAPT.org
www.TomDowning.net
TomDowning@weadapt.org



Emissions trading gives companies the flexibility to meet emission targets according to their own strategy by offering the most cost-effective way for energy-intensive industries to meet their obligation to reduce emissions. The underlying commodity traded at ECX are European Union Allowances (EUAs) as issued under the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS), where one EUA represents the right to emit one tonne of carbon dioxide (CO2) and secondary Certified Emission Reductions (CERs), as issued under the Clean Development Mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol. One CER also represents the right to emit one tonne of carbon dioxide (CO2).

Emissions trading is one of the prime examples of using a market-based mechanism to achieve an environmental goal. The rationale behind emission trading is to ensure that the required overall emission reductions take place where the cost of the reduction is lowest, thus lowering the overall costs of combating climate change. It does not impose a particular type of technology or set rigid limitations on how much can be emitted.

The ‘cap-and-trade’ approach, being used in the EU ETS, sets an overall cap or maximum amount of emissions per compliance period. Companies are given allowances which represent their target or ‘cap’ for a compliance period. At the end of the period they must surrender sufficient allowances to reconcile against their total emissions during the period. If this is below their cap they have allowances to sell; if not, they must purchase allowances from companies which have exceeded their emissions reductions targets. Each allowance permits the holder to emit one tonne of CO2. If an operator does not hold sufficient allowances to meet its total emissions at the compliance date, a penalty of €40 for Phase I 2005-2007 (rising to €100 in the Phase II 2008-2012) per excess tonne will apply.