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Clean Development Mechanisms (CDM) and Sustainable Development in South Countries

by

Pierre OZER*

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SUMMARY. — The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) allows emission-reduction (or emission removal) projects in developing countries to earn Certified Emission Reduction (CER) credits, each equivalent to one tonne of CO₂. These CERs can be traded and sold, and used by industrialized countries to meet a part of their emission reduction targets under the Kyoto Protocol.

The mechanism stimulates sustainable development and emission reductions, while giving industrialized countries some flexibility in how they meet their emission reduction limitation targets. Accepted projects must qualify through a rigorous and public registration and issuance process designed to ensure real, measurable and verifiable emission reductions that are additional to what would have occurred without the project.

Between November 2004 and May 2009, the mechanism has registered 1,653 projects and is anticipated to currently produce CERs amounting to 303 10⁶ tonnes of CO₂ equivalent yearly. The mechanism is extremely interesting since it is the first global, environmental investment and credit scheme of its kind, providing a standardized emissions offset instrument. However the geographical distribution of the CDM projects is revealing very large differences in between developing countries since China, India, Brazil and South-Korea totalise 82 % of the CERs while Africa only represents 3,3% of the total.

* Member of the Royal Academy for Overseas Sciences; Environmental Sciences and Management Department, University of Liège (Belgium).