

P2.1-3 Low Carbon Russia: Perspectives after Crisis

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According to Russian GHG inventory, in 2008 total Russian GHG emissions were 33% below 1990 level and in 2009 Russian energy-related GHG emission is expected to stay 39% below the 1990 level. Russia has paid a high price for its emission reduction in the 90's. This is not "hot air", but this reduction was accompanied by a loss in the economic growth of at least 1,000 \$/ton CO₂ emission reduction (in the mid-90's prices).

Decoupling was mostly a result of dynamic energy intensity reduction, which practically neutralised GDP growth contribution to GHG emissions. The dynamic reduction of GDP energy intensity was basically driven by structural changes. Framing policies in Russia appeared to be more effective in combating GHG emissions, than measures in many other countries. In fact, in a market economy GDP energy intensity is at least twice as low as in a command economy of a similar climate and size. However, despite of the dynamic improvement in energy efficiency, Russia still stays in the list of the most energy intense countries in the world.

As current constraints to achieve low-carbon societies, Russia is much behind in research of low-carbon futures. Only few Russian expert groups provide projections of GHG emission trajectories and investigate mitigation options and policies at country-wide, regional and local levels.

After Russia has successfully decoupled economic growth from emission growth, issues now will be to maintain new and lower levels rather than seek further reductions as Russia will be able to comply with Kyoto. From this perspective, the following points are important issues to be considered:

- Energy efficiency, rather than renewable energy, will be the main driver in future Russian efforts,
- Low-carbon Russia scenarios are necessary to sustain economic growth, not the opposite;
- Russia 'air bag' potential for global mitigation possibilities;
- Hot summer in 2010 may provoke shift in people's attitudes and understanding of climate change; and
- Energy price per unit of GDP has proved to be a key determinant of impact and growth.

The main focus on Russian policies to mitigate GHG emissions are to implement the modernisation policy for the whole economy, to reduce GDP energy intensity by 40% in 2007-2020, to develop renewable (except large hydro) contribution to power generation up to 4,5% in 2020 (promoting policies are still weak), to approve the first 15 joint implementation projects with total GHG emission reduction of 40 million t of CO₂ equivalent (2010), and to adopt the Russian Federation climate doctrine.