

## ETC Group Launches First-ever “PIE-IN-THE-SKY” Contest for Budding Geoengineers

The first ever “Pie-in-the-Sky” contest for the wackiest geoengineering scheme to combat global warming is taking off just as controversial planetary techno-fixes are heating up. Since the beginning of the year, an Indo-German ship has launched itself into the Southern Ocean and dumped tonnes of iron sulphate overboard in a dubious attempt to drive CO<sub>2</sub> to the ocean floor;<sup>1</sup> a madcap corporate venture is preparing to spread urea in the Tasman Sea for the same purpose;<sup>2</sup> a British university has issued a ratings list for different geoengineering practices;<sup>3</sup> and the UK's Royal Society is about to issue its own geoengineering assessment.<sup>4</sup>

The Canadian-based ETC Group is introducing its international “Pie-in-the-Sky” competition to spotlight the wackiest proposals for intentionally manipulating the earth, oceans and/or atmosphere. “The proof of principle is well-established,” says Kathy Jo Wetter of ETC group. “Industrialization geoengineered us into the climate mess in the first place, and some companies and scientists are crazy enough to think they can geoengineer us out of it.”

In the real world, geoengineers are already working on a frightening array of weird ideas with plans to wrap deserts in plastic, sequester CO<sub>2</sub> in the ocean by 'fertilizing' its surface, not to mention placing solar shades above the clouds to deflect sunlight. “These corporate and government-backed experiments really deflect society's attention from vital policy and lifestyle changes needed to reduce emissions,” adds ETC's Silvia Ribeiro, “by touting profoundly hazardous, extremely expensive yet potentially profitable technological Band-Aids.”

Anyone anywhere with a macabre sense of the ridiculous and a concern for the future is invited to enter the contest. The winning submission will be original, ludicrous and contain at least a nano-shred of perverse logic. Since the truth of geoengineering is stranger than fiction, contestants will not be penalized for hatching a nutty idea that scientists have already proposed. Submissions should be sent to [geoengineer@etcgroup.org](mailto:geoengineer@etcgroup.org) before April Fools' Day

1 See [http://www.etcgroup.org/en/materials/publications.html?pub\\_id=719](http://www.etcgroup.org/en/materials/publications.html?pub_id=719)

2 See Ben Cubby, “Climate scientists seek a urea moment,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, January 21, 2009; available online: <http://www.smh.com.au/news/environment/global-warming/climate-scientists-seek-a-urea-moment/2009/01/20/1232213646774.html>

3 T. M. Lenton and N. E. Vaughan, “The radiative forcing potential of different climate geoengineering options,” *Atmos. Chem. Phys. Discuss.*, 9, 2559-2608, 2009; For podcast by Lenton: <http://www.uea.ac.uk/lentongoengineering>

4 See <http://royalsociety.org/page.asp?id=2556>

(April 1 2009). The winner will be announced on Earth Day, April 22 2009, on [www.etcgroup.org](http://www.etcgroup.org)

Geoengineering competition submissions should be no longer than 200 words and can be submitted in English, Spanish, French or Portuguese. Sketches and designs that help explain the technological strategy – or impact – are welcome. The winning techno-fix will be crafted into a cartoon that ETC will publish on its website and elsewhere. The winner will receive a T-shirt emblazoned with his/her winning geoengineering scheme.

This is the latest in a series of annual or biennial contests launched by ETC group. Its best known is the biennial Captain Hook Awards for Biopiracy. In 2007, the *Washington Post* reproduced in color a selection of its favorite designs submitted to our International Nano-Hazard Symbol Design Competition.

Contestants need look no further than the real world for inspiration. See for example:

[http://www.etcgroup.org/en/materials/publications.html?pub\\_id=608](http://www.etcgroup.org/en/materials/publications.html?pub_id=608)

and

<http://www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/docs/cnbe/cnbe.html>

Download a full-color poster by Stig, which includes contest details and an illustration of a “pie-in-the-sky” launch, ETC's own geoengineering bright idea:

A print quality version is available here:

[http://www.etcgroup.org/upload/body\\_image/53/02/piesky\\_webposter\\_big.jpg](http://www.etcgroup.org/upload/body_image/53/02/piesky_webposter_big.jpg)

A screen quality version is available here:

[http://www.etcgroup.org/upload/body\\_image/51/02/piesky\\_webposter\\_medium.jpg](http://www.etcgroup.org/upload/body_image/51/02/piesky_webposter_medium.jpg)

For more information about geoengineering and other ETC competitions, please contact:

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