



Economia dello Sviluppo – Seminar: Integrated Assessment Models: Theory and Applications

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Lecture Structure

1. Background: IAM
2. Modeling: RICE
3. Original contribution: CCUS
4. An application: FEEM-RICE with CCUS

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1. Background: IAM

- What is an Integrated Assessment Model?
- Taxonomies of IAMs
- Origins & Development of IAMs
- Survey of the Literature: 2010-2024
- Most Common IAMs in the Literature
- Limitations of Mainstream IAMs
- Solutions in Mainstream IAMs
- AB-IAMs: A Heterodox Alternative

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1.1 What is an Integrated Assessment Model?

Nordhaus (2017)

Approaches that integrate knowledge from two or more domains into a single framework — a broad definition spanning a vast spectrum of tools and objectives.

Integrated Assessment Society

Integrated Assessment Society: The scientific "meta-discipline" that integrates knowledge about a problem domain and makes it available for societal learning and decision-making processes.

Fisher-Vanden & Weyant (2020)

Fisher-Vanden & Weyant (2020): Tools that capture complex interactions across natural and human systems and across spatial and temporal scales — for impact analysis, policy-making, and adaptation strategies.

Common traits: multidisciplinary approach · cohesive mathematical framework · focus on climate–economy interactions

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1.2 Taxonomies of IAMs

By modeling Approach (Weyant, 2017)

Benefit-Cost (BC): Aggregate economic costs & impacts; optimize GHG trajectories & SCC. Ex: DICE, RICE

Detailed Process (DP): Disaggregated physical & economic impacts; thousands of equations. Ex: IMAGE, ASF

By Integration Structure (Parson & Fisher-Vanden, 1997)

Vertical: Linear causal chain: emissions → carbon cycle → climate → economic impacts → policy.

Horizontal: Expands the vertical chain with feedback loops, or adds cross-issue linkages (ozone, health, land use).

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1.2 Taxonomies of IAMs

Five functions of IAMs (Bosetti, 2021)

Q1: Assess climate implications of a business-as-usual emission path (no climate action)

Q2: Assess climate implications of pledged national policies

Q3: Identify least-costly techno-economic pathways to a climate target (e.g. 1.5° C)

Q4: Find "optimal" temperature increase where mitigation costs equal benefits; estimate SCC

Q5: Assess physical impacts, accounting for nonlinear processes in the Earth system

Policy Optimization (POM) vs Policy Evaluation (PEM) (Toth, 2005)

POM: Optimization procedure to determine optimal policy variables (e.g. carbon tax level) via cost-benefit framework.

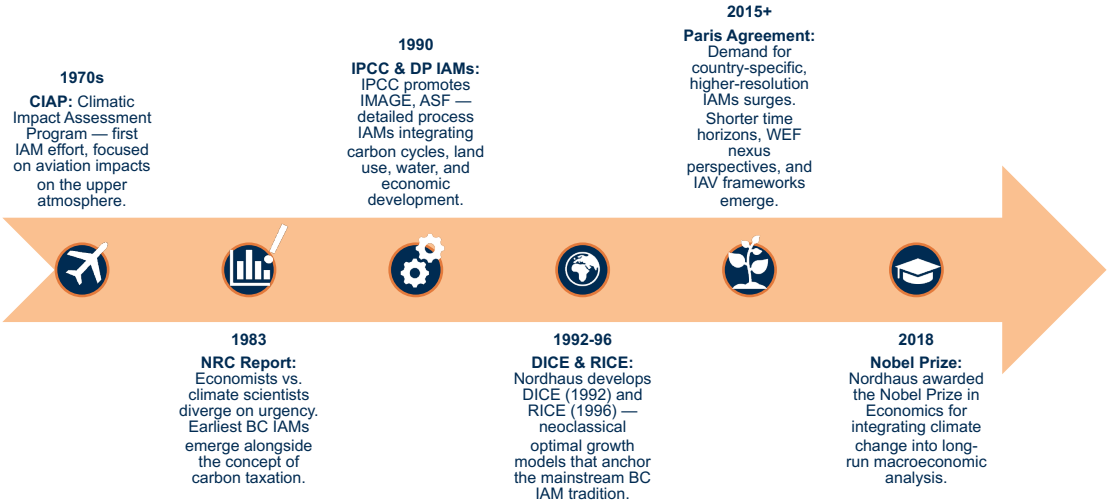
PEM: Simulation to assess cost-effectiveness of specified policies or targets; may lack an explicit damage function.

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1.3 Origins & Development of IAMs



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1.4 Survey of the Literature: 2010–2024

2,017 articles surveyed from Scopus

4x growth in IAM publications since 2010

Geographic Focus: Concentrated in Advanced Economies

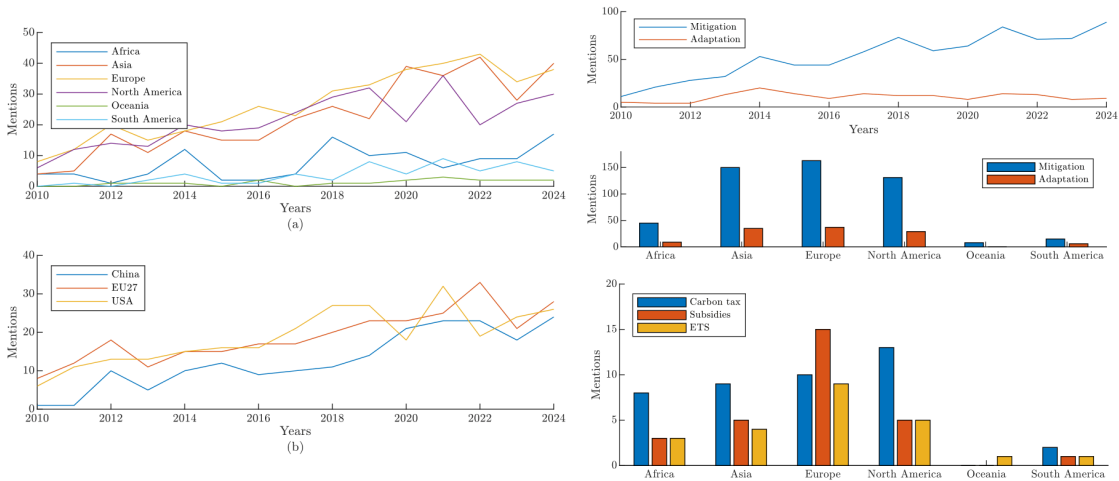
- China**: Most mentioned country
- European Union**: Largest variety of policy tools
- United States**: Second most mentioned single entity

Policy Tools & Technologies Studied

- #1 Carbon Tax**: Most common policy
- #2 Subsidies**: Especially popular in EU
- #3 ETS**: Emission Trading
- #1 RES**: Renewables
- #2 CCUS**: Carbon Capture & Storage

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1.4 Survey of the Literature: 2010–2024

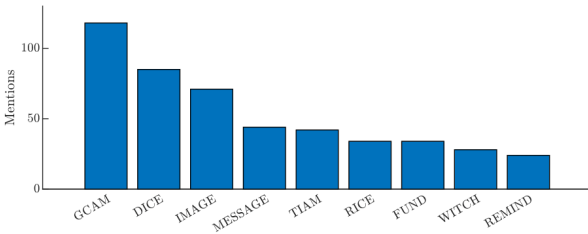


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1.5 Most Common IAMs in the Literature



Source: Scopus dataset (2010–2024), IAMC model registry

Model	Description
GCAM	Global Change Analysis Model — energy, agriculture, land, climate
DICE	Neoclassical optimal growth, SCC, global single-region
IMAGE	Multi-regional partial equilibrium, detailed biophysics
MESSAGE	CGE, detailed energy planning, IIASA framework
TIAM	Technology-rich, energy system pathways, multi-region
RICE	Multi-regional version of DICE
FUND	Sector-specific damage functions, 16 regions
WITCH	Endogenous growth, R&D, multi-regional

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1.6 Limitations of Mainstream IAMs

Discounting & Equity:

Discount rates derived from market data give negligible weight to future generations. Intergenerational and international equity are poorly captured by a representative consumer.

Tipping Points:

Catastrophic, nonlinear climate events are largely absent. Including tipping points raises SCC estimates by 25%–100%+ (Cai et al., 2015; Dietz et al., 2021).

Climate Sensitivity & Uncertainty:

Damage functions lack strong empirical grounding. A single discount rate cannot reflect the diverse risk-return structure of real investments.

Heterogeneity & Equilibrium:

Representative-agent assumption ignores distributional impacts. Equilibrium frameworks smooth over multiple equilibria, unemployment persistence, and social conflict.

Missing Financial System:

No banking sector, no endogenous credit cycles. Climate shocks cannot propagate through financial markets. Mitigation is treated as a cost, not as someone's income.

Arbitrary Parameters:

Key choices (social welfare function form, climate sensitivity, damage functions) are subject to modeler discretion and can dramatically shift SCC estimates and policy conclusions.

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1.7 Solutions in Mainstream IAMs

Narrowing Scope & Time Horizon

- Growing focus on shorter-run policy evaluations, driven by urgency of near-term climate impacts and demand from national/regional actors following the Paris Agreement (2015)
- Country-specific and sub-national models with higher resolution damage functions and inter-sectoral feedbacks

Increasing Model Detail

- IAV (Impact, Adaptation, Vulnerability) frameworks: coupled detailed system models allowing feedback between large- and fine-scale earth systems, physical systems, and socioeconomic systems
- WEF nexus perspective: explicit recognition of water–energy–food sector interactions and coordination
- Improved energy system characterization and endogenous technological change in several models (e.g. REMIND, WITCH)

Addressing Uncertainty

- Sensitivity analysis on free parameters as standard practice; numerical results not to be taken at face value (US IWG on SCC, 2010)
- Hindcasting exercises to test model performance against historical data
- Cross-model comparison under identical scenarios to identify sources of uncertainty and bound outcomes

Limits of These Solutions (Gambhir et al., 2019)

- Increased detail brings greater computational and data burdens
- Aggregation across resolutions may still interfere with reliability of physical systems and distributional capture
- Fundamental structural issues — representative agent, equilibrium assumption, missing financial system — remain largely unaddressed

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1.8 AB-IAMs: A Heterodox Alternative

What AB-IAMs Do Differently

- **Heterogeneous agents:** Firms, households, banks interact with diverse behaviors — no representative agent
- **Bounded rationality:** Agents use heuristics from behavioral economics, not utility maximization
- **No equilibrium required:** Multiple equilibria, unemployment persistence, and out-of-equilibrium dynamics all possible
- **Realistic financial system:** Credit markets propagate climate shocks; green finance constrains or accelerates transition
- **Clear distributional implications:** Wealth distributions and equity metrics evolve across agent classes over time
- **Monte Carlo simulation:** Hundreds of replications provide outcome distributions, not point estimates; scenario-discovery techniques identify policy-relevant parameter combinations

Five AB-IAMs with Full Climate–Economy Feedback		Key features
ABM-IAM	Safarzyńska & van den Bergh (2022)	Calibrated on DICE; income inequality → SCC
CFHS	Czupryna et al. (2020)	Multi-regional; region-specific productivity damages
DSK	Lamperti et al. (2018)	Multi-sectoral; labor, capital, energy, inventory shocks; financial stability
GRSW	Gerdes et al. (2022)	Global South/North trade; distributional climate impacts
MATRIX	Bazzana et al. (2024)	Modular climate modules; heterogeneous vs. homogeneous damages; Euro Area

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2. Modeling: RICE

- What is the RICE model?
- How does RICE work?
- Module 1: The Economy
- The RICE World: 8 Regions
- Module 2: Emissions and the Carbon Cycle
- Module 3: Climate, CO₂ and Temperature
- The Damage Function
- Abatement Costs and the Policy Trade-off
- Optimization and Policy Scenarios
- The Carbon Tax and the Social Cost of Carbon

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2.1 What is the RICE model?

RICE stands for Regional Integrated model of Climate and the Economy. Developed by William Nordhaus & Joseph Boyer (Yale University, 2000).

REGIONAL:

Splits the world into 8–13 regions (USA, Europe, China, etc.) so each area has its own economy, emissions, and climate impact.

INTEGRATED:

Connects the economy with the carbon cycle and the climate, all in one coherent model.

DYNAMIC:

Runs forward in time (decade by decade up to 2100+), tracking how variables evolve.

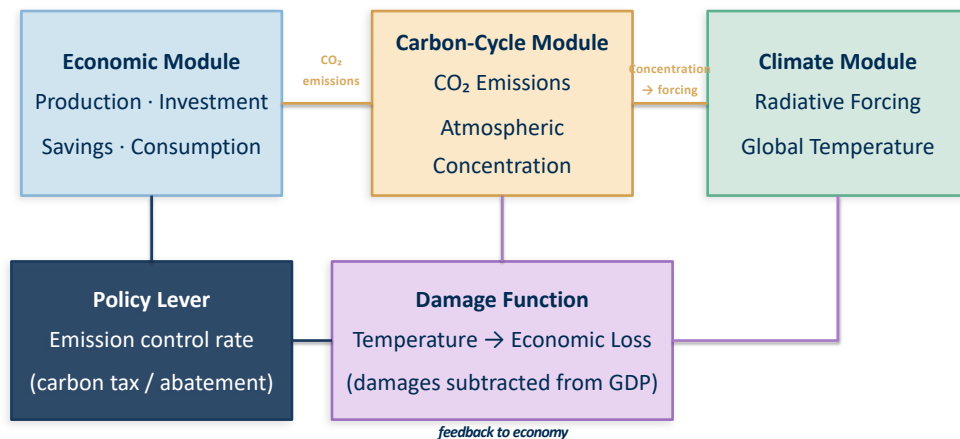
Core question: How should society balance the cost of cutting emissions today against the damages of climate change in the future?

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2.1 How does RICE work?



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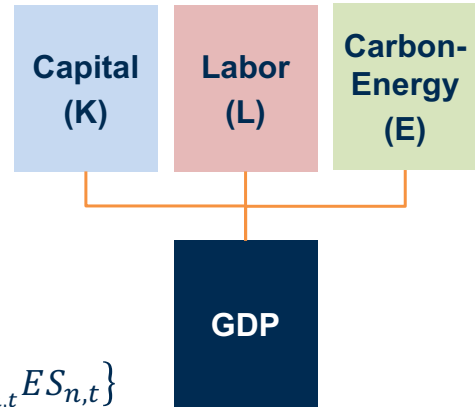
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2.2 Module 1: The Economy

How does the economy produce output?

- Each region produces GDP using Capital (K), Labour (L), and Carbon-Energy (E).
- But burning fossil fuels emits CO₂, which causes future climate damages.
- Regions invest part of their income to build new capital (factories, infrastructure).
- Population and technology grow over time → economy grows even without new policy.



$$Q_{n,t} = \Omega_{n,t} \{ A_{n,t} K_{n,t}^\gamma L_{n,t}^{1-b_n-\gamma} E S_n^{b_n} - c_{E_{n,t}} E S_{n,t} \}$$

with $ES_{n,t} = \zeta_{n,t} E_{n,t}$

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2.2 Capital Accumulation

Production Function (Cobb-Douglas)

$$Q_{nt} = \Omega_{nt} A_{nt} K_{nt}^\gamma L_{nt}^{1-b_n-\gamma} E S_{nt}^{b_n}$$

K = capital · L = labour · ES = carbon energy



Capital Accumulation

$$K_{n,t+1} = (1-\delta_n) K_{n,t} + I_{n,t}$$

δ_n = depreciation

What are the elasticities?

γ = capital elasticity of output

- A 1% increase in K raises output by exactly $\gamma\%$
- Equals capital's share of income — calibrated around $\gamma \approx 0.3$
- Constant and identical across all RICE regions

b_n = carbon-energy elasticity of output

- A 1% increase in carbon energy raises output by $b_n\%$
- Region-specific: reflects each region's energy intensity
- Labour exponent = $1 - b_n - \gamma$ (exponents sum to 1 → Constant Returns to Scale)

$\gamma + (1-b_n-\gamma) + b_n = 1 \rightarrow$ **Constant Returns to Scale (CRS)**

Doubling all inputs exactly doubles output — no scale advantage or disadvantage.

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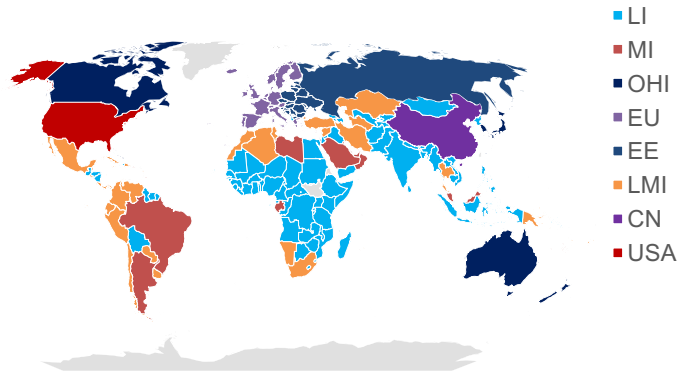
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2.3 The RICE World

Regions:

- USA
- China (CN)
- Europe (EU)
- Other High Income (OHI)
- Easter Europe (EE)
- Middle Income (MI)
- Lower-Middle Income (LMI)
- Lower Income (LI)

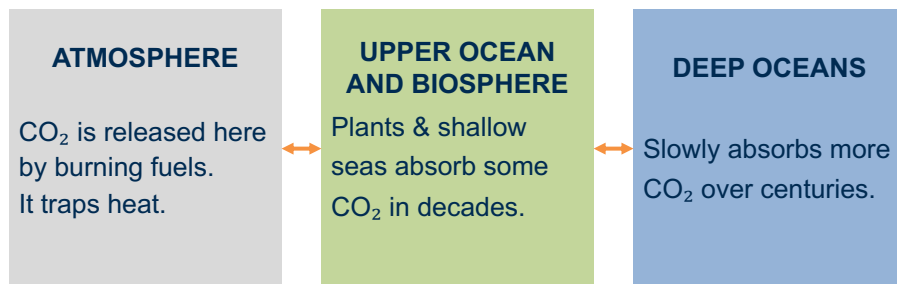
RICE-99 Regions



Each region optimizes its own economy, but CO₂ emissions mix globally → one region's pollution affects everyone's climate.

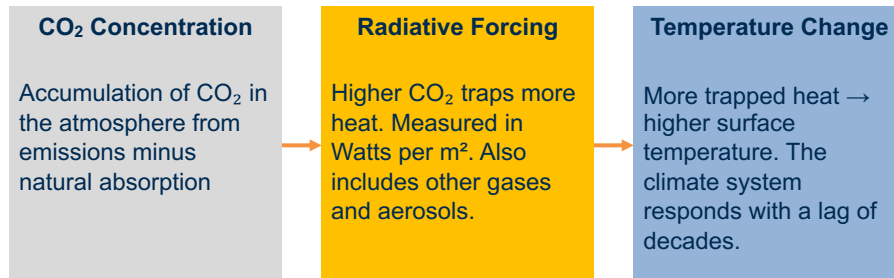
2.4 Module 2: Emissions and the Carbon Cycle

Burning fossil fuels emits CO₂. That CO₂ it moves between three 'boxes':



CO₂ is a 'stock pollutant': it accumulates over decades and centuries. Even if we stop all emissions today, the CO₂ already in the atmosphere keeps warming the planet. This is why early action matters, the damage is hard to undo.

2.5 Module 3: Climate, CO₂ and Temperature



Two climate parameters:

- **Climate Sensitivity:** How much warming from doubling CO₂ concentration. Estimates range from 1.5 to 4.5°C.
- **Climate Lag:** The ocean absorbs heat slowly, so temperature catches up to forcing over time. Past emissions still causing future warming.

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2.6 The Damage Function

Temperature → Economic Loss

$$\Omega_{n,t} = 1 - \frac{1}{1 + \alpha_{1n} \Delta T_t + \alpha_{2n} \Delta T_t^2}$$

- Once temperature rises, the economy suffers losses. The damage function converts °C of warming into % of GDP lost.
- **Agriculture:** Crop yields fall in hotter, drier regions
- **Coastal flooding:** Sea level rise threatens cities & infrastructure
- **Human health:** Spread of heat-related and tropical diseases
- **Catastrophic risk:** Low-probability, very large ('tail') events
- **Non-market impacts:** Ecosystem loss, biodiversity, cultural value

Damages are non-linear!!! doubling temperature more than doubles the damage. Small differences in warming matter a lot at high temperatures.

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2.7 The Cost of Cutting Emissions → Abatement Cost

- Reducing CO₂ emissions is not free. Using less fossil fuel means less energy available for the economy → lower output.
- The emission control rate (μ) represents how much of potential emissions are cut.
- **Trade-off:**

Cut emissions now

- Less CO₂ in atmosphere
- Lower future temperature
- GDP lost today to abatement costs

VS

Do nothing now

- No GDP loss today
- More CO₂ and higher temperature
- Higher future GDP loss

Cost rises quickly as you try to cut more and more emissions. Cutting 10% of emissions is cheap; cutting 90% is very expensive. → Curved, convex cost relationship.

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2.8 What does RICE optimize?

- The RICE model finds the policy that maximizes total welfare across all regions and all future generations.
- **Consumption** = each region's GDP net of investment and abatement costs
- **Discount rate:** future welfare counts less than current welfare (VERY CONTROVERSIAL AND CAN DRIVE RESULTS)
- **Sum over time and regions**
- **Goal: choose the emission control rate (in each region, each decade) to maximize total discounted welfare → Optimal policy**

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2.9 Policy scenarios

RICE can simulate different policy choices and compare their outcomes:

- **BAU:** no climate policy. Emissions grow freely. Used as Baseline to compare policy results.
- **Optimal:** The best policy found by the model by maximizing global welfare.
- **Kyoto Protocol:** The same but constrained by emission targets for rich countries only.
- **Global Carbon tax:** All regions pay the same tax per ton of CO₂.

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2.10 Carbon tax

In the optimal policy, the model computes a “**carbon shadow price**”, equivalent to a tax on CO₂ emissions.

How does it work?

- A price is placed on each tonne of CO₂ emitted (e.g. \$20 per tonne).
- Firms and households respond by switching to cleaner energy or using less energy, because fossil fuels become more expensive.
- CO₂ emissions fall. Less CO₂ → slower concentration rise → lower future temperature.
- The optimal tax equals the 'Social Cost of Carbon' (SCC): the monetary value of damage caused by one extra tonne of CO₂.

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3. Original contribution: CCUS

1. What is CCUS? Why do we need it?
2. Technologies
 - Capture
 - Utilization
 - Transport
 - Storage

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3.1 What is CCUS?

Carbon Capture Utilization and Storage

- CCUS involves the capture of CO₂, from power generation or industrial facilities using fossil fuels or biomass as fuel.
- If not being used on-site, captured CO₂ is compressed and transported by pipeline, ship, rail or truck.
- CO₂ can be used in a range of applications, or injected into deep geological formations such as depleted oil and gas reservoirs or saline aquifers.

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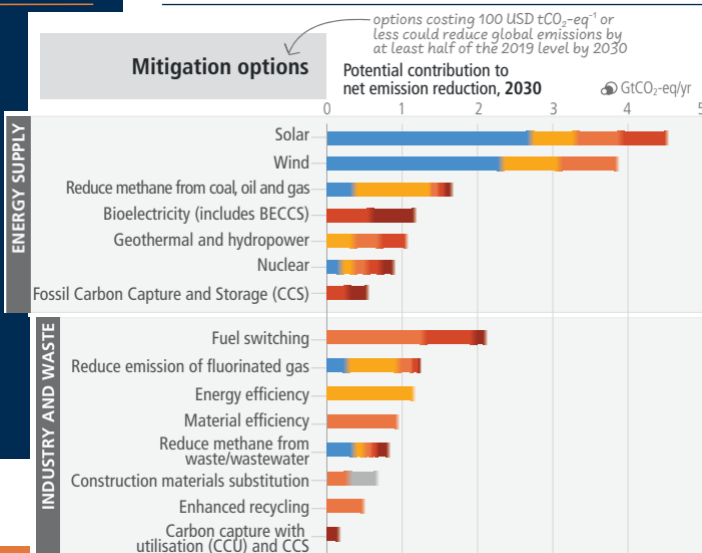
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3.1 What is CCUS?

Carbon Capture Utilization and Storage

- Carbon capture can be retrofitted to existing power and industrial plants.
- It can tackle emissions in *hard-to-abate sectors*, particularly heavy industries like cement, steel or chemicals.
- Capture technologies can remove CO₂ from the air (DAC) to balance emissions that are unavoidable or technically difficult to abate.

3.2 Why do we need CCUS?



“Global modelled mitigation pathways reaching net zero CO₂ and GHG emissions include transitioning from fossil fuels without carbon capture and storage (CCS) to very low- or zero-carbon energy sources, such as renewables or fossil fuels with CCS, demand-side measures and improving efficiency, reducing non-CO₂ GHG emissions, and CDR.”

Source: IPCC, 2024 Synthesis Report

Net lifetime cost of options:

- Costs are lower than the reference
- 0–20 (USD per tCO₂-eq)
- 20–50 (USD per tCO₂-eq)
- 50–100 (USD per tCO₂-eq)
- 100–200 (USD per tCO₂-eq)
- Cost not allocated due to high variability or lack of data

3.3 Technologies: Capture

- **Precombustion capture.** Breaking down hydrocarbons in natural gas or coal into hydrogen and CO₂. Typically carried out by the reforming of natural gas or gasification of coal or petroleum coke. The resulting CO₂ is then compressed and transported for storage.
- **Post-combustion capture.** CO₂ is stripped from flue gases and then compressed and transported for storage.
- **Oxy-fuel processes.** Fuel is combusted using almost pure oxygen instead of air. Thus, burning fuel produces water and pure CO₂ exhaust gas that can be captured at relatively low cost for transportation and storage.

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3.3 Technologies: Capture

- **DACCS.** Large fans to pull in atmospheric air and pass it through a liquid solvent or solid sorbent, which extracts the CO₂ from it. The solvent or sorbent is then heated to remove the CO₂ for compression, transportation and storage.
- **BECCS.** Bioenergy with Carbon Capture and Storage. Cropland area absorbs CO₂ and supplies biomass for bioenergy. Biofuel is converted into energy while applying other CCS technologies → net reduction is atmospheric CO₂.

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3.4 Technologies: Utilization

- CO₂ used for production of fuels and chemicals
 - Electrocatalytic conversion to produce CO, methane, methanol and hydrocarbons
 - Plastics, reducing consumption of petrolchemical products
 - Urea for agriculture
- **Mineralization** (accelerated carbonation) for construction material
- **Beverage and food processing** (decaffeinated tea/coffee, vitamin additives, defatted/fat-free processed foods)
- Biological utilization (carbohydrate conversion in algae)
- **Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR)** and CO₂ fracking

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3.5 Technologies: Transport

- Ships
- Pipelines
 - New infrastructure
 - Convert old infrastructure
- Different cost profiles, best option depends on currently available infrastructure and distance to repository

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3.6 Technologies: Storage

- Depleted oil and gas reservoirs or saline aquifers (EOR)
- Deep ocean or sea bed (pumped to a suitable depth for storage)
- Crushed rock on the surface (mineralization)
- Injection into reactive rock formations (mineralization)
- Coal-bed methane (fracking)
- Methane hydrates (fracking)

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4. An application: FEEM-RICE with CCUS

- What is FEEM-RICE?

$$\text{RICE 99: } Q_{n,t} = \Omega_{n,t} \{ A_{n,t} K_{n,t}^\gamma L_{n,t}^{1-b_n-\gamma} E S_n^{b_n} - c_{E_{n,t}} E S_{n,t} \}$$

Endogenous
technical
change

$$\text{FEEM-RICE: } Q_{n,t} = \Omega_{n,t} \left\{ A_{n,t} K_{n,t}^{1-\alpha_n(ETCI)} L_{n,t}^\gamma E S_{n,t}^{\alpha_n(ETCI)} - c_{E_{n,t}} E S_{n,t} \right\}$$

$$\text{with } \alpha_n = \alpha_n(ETCI_{n,t}) = \frac{\beta_{1n}}{2 - \exp[\beta_{0n} ETCI_{n,t}]}$$

$$\text{and } ETCI_{n,t} = K_{Rn,t}^c ABAT_{n,t}^{1-c}$$

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4.1 Production function and factors

- Production

$$Q_{n,t} = \underbrace{\Omega_{n,t}}_{\text{Climate damage}} A_{n,t} \left[\underbrace{K_{n,t}^{1-\alpha_n(ETCI)-\gamma}}_{\text{Capital}} \underbrace{L_{n,t}^\gamma}_{\text{Labor}} \underbrace{ES_{n,t}^{\alpha_n(ETCI)}}_{\text{Carbon energy}} \right] - \underbrace{C_{E_{n,t}} ES_{n,t}}_{\text{Energy expenses}}$$

- Labor and TFP on an exogenous path accounting for region-specific population growth trends

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4.2 Endogenous technical change

Endogenous Technological Change Index

composite index combining two stocks

$$ETCI_{n,t} = \underbrace{K_{Rn,t}^a}_{\text{Stock of knowledge}} \underbrace{ABAT_{Sn,t}^b}_{\text{Stock of cumulated emission abatement}}$$

$$\begin{aligned} K_{Rn,t+1} &= R\&D_{n,t} + (1 - \delta_R)K_{Rn,t} \\ ABAT_{Sn,t+1} &= \delta_A ABAT_{Fn,t} + (1 - \delta_B)ABAT_{Sn,t} \end{aligned}$$

- The stock of knowledge grows with current R&D spending each period and depreciates at rate δ_R
- The stock of cumulated emission abatement incorporates current abatement flows weighted by a learning factor δ_A , and depreciate at rate δ_B — it captures *learning-by-doing*: the more a region has abated in the past, the more technologically efficient it becomes today

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4.3 CCUS Technical Change

CCUS Technological Change Index

$$CTCI(n, t) = \frac{CCUS(n, t)^c}{ABAT_{CCUS}(n, t)^d}$$

Stock of CCUS investment
Stock of cumulated emission abatement with CCUS

$$CCUS_{n,t+1} = CCUS_{f,n,t} + (1 - \delta_{CCUS})CCUS_{n,t}$$

$$ABAT_{CCUS}(n, t + 1) = \delta_{CCUS}ABAT_f(n, t) + (1 - \delta_{CCUS})ABAT_{CCUS}(n, t)$$

Carbon emissions

$$E_{n,t} = \zeta_{n,t} \left(\frac{1}{2 - e^{\psi_n ETCl_{n,t} - \omega_n CTCl_{n,t}}} \right) ES_{n,t}$$

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4.4 Capital

Capital accumulation

$$K_{n,t+1} = K_{n,t}(1 - \delta) + I_{n,t} - \lambda R\&D_{n,t} - (1 - U)(1 + CCUS_{cost\ n,t})CCUS_{f\ n,t} - \mu CCUS_{n,t}$$

Utilization

In other words:

New Capital = **Depreciated Old Capital** + **Investments** – **Resources**
dedicated to **CCUS and R&D**

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4.5 Modeling CCUS costs

With cost of CCUS

$$CCUS_{cost}(n, t) = \bar{D}(n) + \left(1 - \frac{ABAT_{CCUS}(n, t)}{E(n, t)}\right)$$

How do we estimate the transport cost parameter $\bar{D}(n)$?

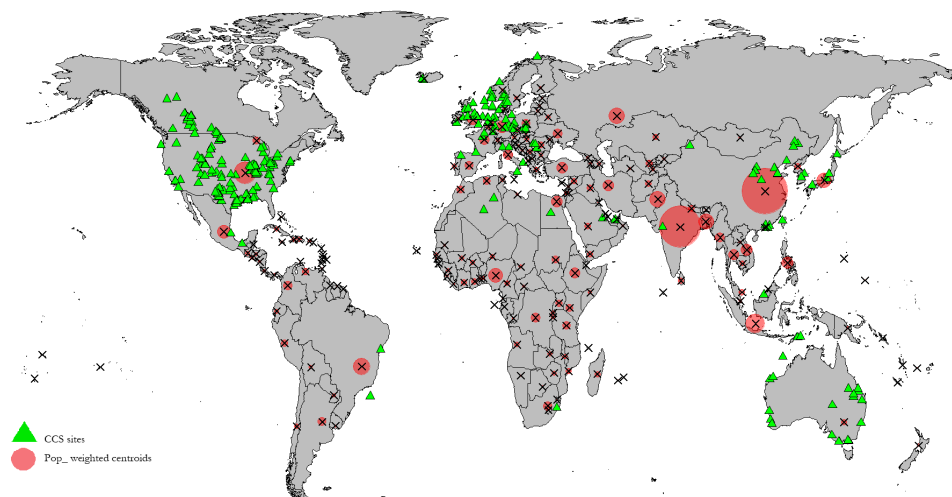
- $\bar{D}(n)$ is the normalized regional GDP-weighted average distance between each country's population centroid and its closest CO₂ storage site

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4.7 Emission centers and carbon sinks



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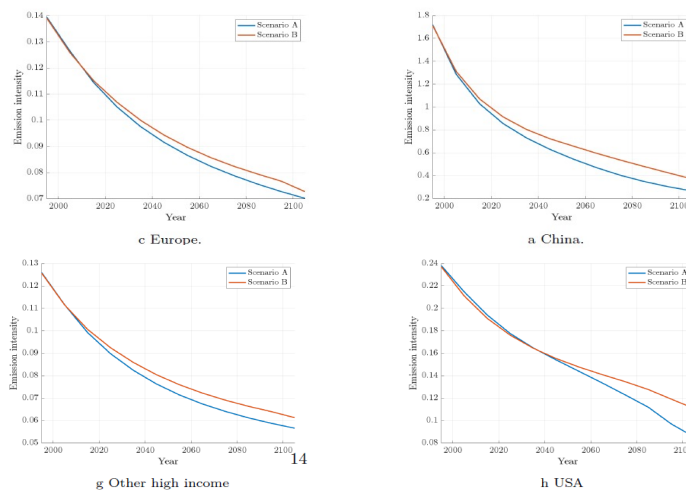
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4.8 Calibrating CCUS costs

- Identify population centroids with grid data
- Compute distance to all reservoirs (Haversine formula) and identify minimum distance
- For each region compute GDP-weighted minimum distances
- Normalize GDP-weighted minimum distances so that our parameters go from least costly $\bar{D}(n) = 0$ to most expensive $\bar{D}(n) = 1$

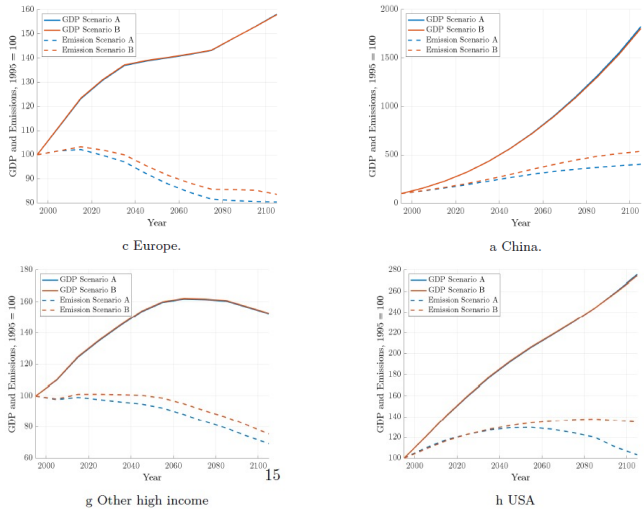
Region	Initial CCUS stock	Distance
China	28.308	0.162
Eastern Europe (EE)	1.378	0.854
Europe	71.631	0.0
Lower Income (LI)	0.000	0.689
Lower-Middle Income (LMI)	2.700	1.0
Other High Income (OHI)	76.163	0.12
Middle Income (MI)	17.843	0.606
USA	64.205	0.007

4.9 Results – Emission Intensity



Scenario A is the benchmark (no CCUS explicit)

4.10 Results – GDP and emissions



Scenario A is the benchmark (no CCUS explicit)

4.11 Results – Temperature control

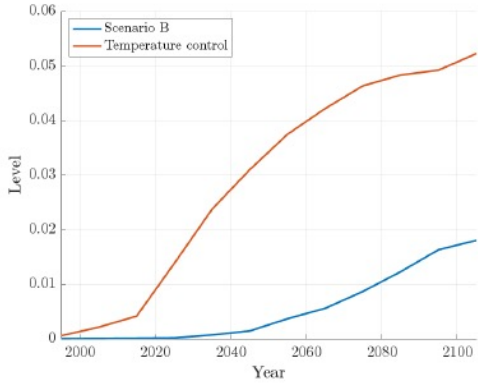
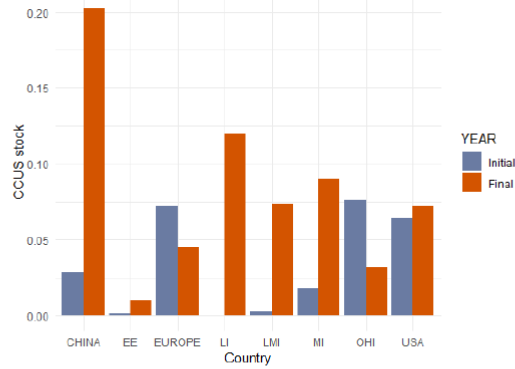


Figure 9: Evolution of global aggregate CCUS investment, in Scenario B (blue) and control (red).
Note: Values expressed in trillion USD.

4.12 Results – CCUS Investments



Region	% Variation
China	-0.61
Eastern Europe (EE)	0.12
Europe	0.08
Lower Income (LI)	-0.53
Lower-Middle Income (LMI)	-0.03
Middle Income (MI)	0.12
Other High Income (OHI)	0.26
USA	0.10

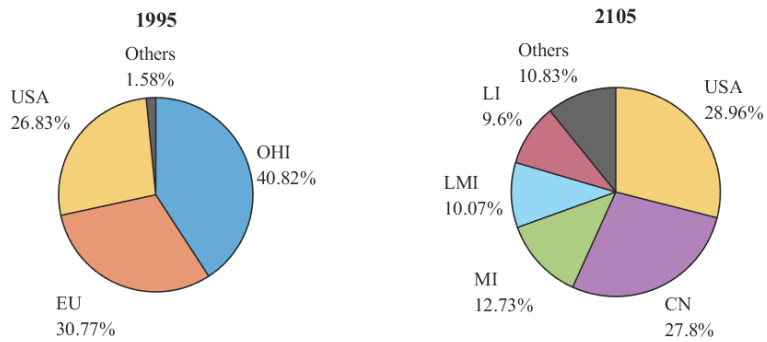
Table 3: Economic impacts by regions.

Figure 4: Level of CCUS investment at the beginning of the simulations and at end of the century.

Note: Values expressed in trillion USD.

4.13 Results – CCUS Investments

Initial and final CCUS investments





Thank you!

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