Global Environmental Assessment Project

based at

Harvard University

University Committee on the Environment

sponsored by

NSF, NOAA, DOE, NASA, EPA, NIGEC, and others
Project Objectives

• Deepen critical understanding of the relationships among research, assessment and management in the global environmental arena

• Enhance communication among scholars and practitioners of global environmental assessments

• Illuminate contemporary choices facing the designers of global environmental assessments.
Participants

- **Core Faculty and Staff**
  - Bill Clark, Director
  - Barbara Connolly
  - Nancy Dickson, Assoc. Dir.
  - Robert Frosch
  - John Holdren
  - Jill Jaeger
  - Sheila Jasanoff
  - Robert Keohane
  - James McCarthy
  - Ronald Mitchell
  - Edward Parson
  - Daniel Schrag

- **Pre-Doctoral, Post-Doctoral, & Faculty Fellows (~21 to date)**

- **Faculty, Research, & Fellow Affiliates (~17)**
Activities

• 5 year project begun in 1996
• Fellows’ Working Paper Series
• Practitioner & Scholar Workshops
• http://environment.harvard.edu/gea
Issues

- Climate Change
  - IPCC
  - US National Assessment
- Tropospheric Air Pollutants
  - Acid Rain
  - Ozone
- Stratospheric Ozone
- ENSO Events
Defining Assessment

The Bridge Between Science and Policy

- As a report
- As a social communication process
- As an information and decision support system
Defining Assessment

• Systematically synthesizes existing knowledge
• Develops a science- and technology-based understanding for policy makers
• Produces identifiable products
• Authorized by identifiable institutions
A Conceptual Framework

The World
- Target Groups
- Environmental Conditions

Research & Technology

Assessment

Policy & Decision Making
Effective Assessments

- Contextual Determinants
  - Historical Context
    - issue cycle
  - Social & Institutional Context
  - Issue Characteristics
    - value conflicts, spatial & temporal scale
  - User Characteristics
    - interest, capacity, openness
Effective Assessments

- **Contextual Determinants**
- **Institutional Design**

- **Science/Policy Interface**
  - boundary organizations & objects

- **Participation**
  - “Segmenting the legitimacy market”

- **Uncertainty & Dissent**
  - risk, uncertainty, & indeterminacy
Effective Assessments

- **Contextual Determinants**
- **Institutional Design**
- **Elements of Effectiveness**

- **Saliency**
  - relevance & value

- **Credibility**
  - authoritativeness

- **Legitimacy**
  - fairness & openness