

Blockchain for Climate – Kickstart & COP23 Hackathon

Addressing climate change represents one of the world's biggest challenges. Blockchain technology is regarded by many as one of the world's most high potential technologies. Today, these two topics are actively brought together at the occasion of the UN climate talks – with the mission to support Paris Agreement and Agenda 2030 implementation. In general, Blockchain holds the potential to increase trust, cut administrative costs, and greatly increase transparency, which in turn may lead to improved stakeholder integration. This is recognised by the UNFCCC Secretariat and other institutions. The #CarbonBC project is an example of a specific initiative that aims at mobilizing Blockchain's potential for climate. It is represented by a consortium of research and development partners. #CarbonBC's objective is to develop an innovation ecosystem at the intersection of Blockchain and climate. As one element of its range of activities, a 'Blockchain for Climate' hackathon will be held as part of #CarbonBC during COP23 in Bonn. The #GloCha project offers a specific youth focused example of how Blockchain could facilitate the integration of non-state actors.

The Secretariat's View

The United Nations Climate Change secretariat recognises the general potential of Blockchain technology. In particular, transparency, cost-effectiveness and efficiency advantages, which in turn may lead to greater stakeholder integration and enhanced creation of global public goods are currently viewed as the main potential benefits. The secretariat, therefore, specifically supports projects that lead to innovation at the intersection of Blockchain and climate.

On #CarbonBC

Blockchain, in essence an immutable, unhackable, distributed database technology, holds vast potential for increasing efficiency and transparency, as well as lower costs and streamline processes across industries. It first emerged as the technology behind the Bitcoin digital currency, allowing online payments to be transferred directly, without an intermediary. Although Bitcoin is an interesting and innovative experiment, it is the trust-building Blockchain technology behind it (i.e. its cryptographic approach), which soon emerged as the actual revolutionary aspect.

Recognizing the vast potential Blockchain could have for addressing climate change mitigation, adaptation, and finance, the Swiss not-for-profit foundation Cleantech21 (C21) has built on its own analysis conducted in the course of 2016, and in consultation with partners and advisors – such as ETH Zurich –, formulated the #CarbonBC project. #CarbonBC shall systematically explore the potential of Blockchain technology for supporting the implementation of the Paris Agreement (PA).

During COP22 in Marrakesh (11/2016), C21 held a first set of consultations with policy makers close to UNFCCC negotiations. Between December 2016 and February 2017, C21 hosted a series of 3 #CarbonBC workshops (supported by the EU's Climate-KIC program and LIFE Climate Foundation Liechtenstein). Participants included Blockchain specialists, as well as climate experts from business, UNFCCC negotiators, and NGOs with interests in mitigation, adaptation and climate finance.

As a result of the workshops, and the analysis work that followed them, C21 has assembled over a dozen partners to form a research consortium and continue #CarbonBC in the form of a concerted development effort for 2017 and 2018. Key consortium partners are INFRAS (lead consultant) and ETH Zurich (use case consortium lead).

#CarbonBC's 3 parallel project tracks are:

Track 1: Background Research (building the knowledge base);

Track 2: Use Cases (developing the first 5 specific and relevant Blockchain applications for climate);

Track 3: Innovation Call-out (to reach out other Blockchain and Climate stakeholders to source talent and ideas).

Participants of the different tracks regularly share results and convene for review sessions. Together, and with the support of the UNFCCC Secretariat, the 3 #CarbonBC tracks shall help develop an innovation ecosystem at the intersection of Blockchain and climate.

COP23 'Blockchain for Climate' Hackathon

Fostering innovation at the intersection of two knowledge areas and target groups that have so far been separated from each other, is a challenge. To date, there has been little interaction between the actors of those two knowledge communities. For successful innovation at the intersection, Blockchain and climate actors need to convene and closely cooperate. For this reason, #CarbonBC today announced a first Blockchain hackathon to be held during COP23 in Bonn. As of today, international teams can apply to be part of this exciting effort by specifying their interest to carbonbc@cleantech21.org. Interested participants, with specific skills in Blockchain and/or Climate, shall describe their concrete area of proposed activity.

On #GloCha

The #GloCha Blockchain for Youth climate action use case is a youth climate action management tool - an internet portal and a mobile app - based on Blockchain technology. The key messages of the GloCha use case is that youth climate action has a value and that this value can be documented, measured and rewarded. Blockchain technology's key feature of enabling an internet of value and trust creates new opportunities for incentivization and gamification of multi-stakeholder climate action, which will be harnessed by #GloCha in a participatory, transparent and efficient way at low cost in a data format that can be integrated into the UNFCCC Non State Actors Zone for Climate Action information system.

Side Event Note:

Kindly take note that today, from 18:30-20:00 the #CarbonBC project is presented as part of an official side event (Room 'Kaminzimmer').

Press Conference Participants (in order of appearance)

For UNFCCC Secretariat:

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For #CarbonBC:

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