Research note

Climate Protection Governance and Participation in the People’s Republic of China

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Summary
In the last five years China has passed new laws and regulations and has formulated new policies and targets for climate protection. The country’s private sector is also making contributions to this new focus, in terms of technology development, green investments, public–private partnerships, and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) reporting. Civil society organizations, meanwhile, have built networks and launched campaigns and projects at local and national level. Against this backdrop, this paper examines China’s efforts at addressing climate protection from a multilevel governance, collaborative governance, multi-stakeholder, and trisectoral cooperation perspective. It is argued that China is currently implementing a policy mix of command-and-control and market-based mechanisms to address climate change. The case study of Xiamen highlights that local governments in China use low-carbon policies as a marketing tool, but lack strong incentives to actually implement such policies. The case of Xiamen illustrates some policies and potentials of low-carbon reforms and initiatives, but it also discusses the hereto missed opportunities for stakeholder interaction — in particular regarding the involvement of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in projects and campaigns.

Introduction: The growing political relevance of tackling climate change in China
The actions that China has recently taken at both the national and local levels to tackle climate change are of growing political and academic interest in China and worldwide. A growing number of people in multiple Chinese cities are now feeling the effects of air pollution and extreme weather events. Media interest in the subject has also increased (Kuhn and Zhang 2014). Environmental protests by Chinese