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LCE > Vol.2 No.4, December 2011

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## Towards a Global Carbon Integrity System: Learning from the GFC1 and avoiding a GCC<sup>2</sup>

PDF (Size: 113KB) PP. 210-219 DOI: 10.4236/lce.2011.24026

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### ABSTRACT

This paper examines some of the central global ethical and governance challenges of climate change and carbon emissions reduction in relation to globalization, the 'global financial crisis' (GFC), and unsustainable conceptions of the 'good life', and argues in favour of the development of a global carbon 'integrity system'. It is argued that a fundamental driver of our climate problems is the incipient spread of an unsustainable Western version of the 'good life', where resource-intensive, high-carbon western lifestyles, although frequently criticized as unsustainable and deeply unsatisfying, appear to have established an unearned ethical legitimacy. While the ultimate solution to climate change is the development of low carbon lifestyles, the paper argues that it is also important that economic incentives support and stimulate that search: the sustainable versions of the good life provide an ethical pull, whilst the incentives provide an economic push. Yet, if we are going to secure sustainable low carbon lifestyles, it is argued, we need more than the ethical pull and the economic push. Each needs to be institutionalized – built into the governance of global, regional, national, sub-regional, corporate and professional institutions. Where currently weakness in each exacerbates the weaknesses in others, it is argued that governance reform is required in all areas supporting sustainable, low carbon versions of the good life.

### KEYWORDS

Integrity System, Climate Change, Carbon, Good Life, Ethics, Governance

### Cite this paper

C. Sampford, "Towards a Global Carbon Integrity System: Learning from the GFC1 and avoiding a GCC<sup>2</sup>," *Low Carbon Economy*, Vol. 2 No. 4, 2011, pp. 210-219. doi: 10.4236/lce.2011.24026.

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