

DANGEROUS DISTRACTIONS - Diverting attention from real solutions by promoting technologies, offsets and other distractions that delay real action and pose risk and harm to people and ecosystems.



Solar Radiation Manipulation/Modification SRM

Solar geoengineering such as Stratospheric Aerosol Injection is a particularly dangerous distraction that delays climate action and risks causing devastating harm.

Geoengineering

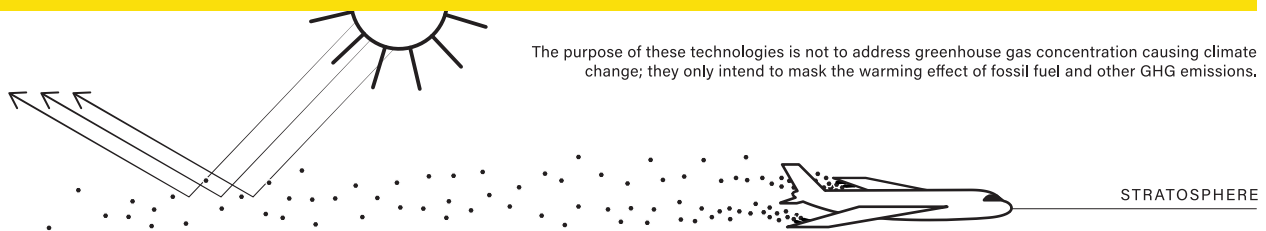
DEFINITION: Technologies conceived to deliberately intervene in and alter Earth's systems at a regional or planetary scale in an attempt to counter some of the symptoms of climate change. Alternate terms increasingly used by its proponents to avoid negative connotations include 'climate intervention strategies,' 'climate altering technologies and measures,' and 'climate protection technologies.'



Danger Alert: Geoengineering approaches fail to address the root causes of climate change, including fossil fuel production, consumption patterns, deforestation, and unsustainable agriculture, thereby allowing those underlying drivers to persist while introducing significant new risks.

What is Solar Radiation Manipulation/Modification SRM?

A suite of technologies that aim to reflect sunlight back into space to hypothetically slow down or reverse global temperature rise. SRM is supposed to block or reflect sunlight either in space, in the atmosphere or on the ground.



DANGEROUS PROPOSALS



SRM cannot undo climate change; instead it creates another kind of climate change with new disturbances and risks.

Stratospheric Aerosol Injection (SAI)

The most talked about and most controversial variant of SRM. Entails releasing large quantities of chemicals into the stratosphere to create a reflective barrier to mitigate the impact of incoming sunlight, using dispersals from aircrafts, artillery guns, stratospheric balloons or large hoses.

Other examples of SRM include attempts to alter reflections of clouds, spreading beads of reflective glass on large swathes of arctic ice, dispersing particles or foaming agents to increase the reflectivity of the ocean and genetically manipulating vegetation and crops to generate more reflective leaves. Other far-reaching propositions include the deployment of huge numbers of mirrors in space or shooting dust from the moon to block some of the sunlight between the sun and Earth.

The Real Risks of SRM

To tackle the urgent climate crisis, we need real strategies, real commitment, real solutions, real funding, and REAL ZERO for an urgent just transition. **NOW.**

DANGEROUS DISTRACTIONS

- 1 Solar geoengineering portrayed as complementary to climate mitigation and adaptation
- 2 Dangerously downplaying risks of SRM deployment
- 3 Deceptive portraying of the technology as a possible 'plan B' and necessity to avoid 'climate overshoot'
- 4 Wrongly framing the choice as between SRM or impacts of climate change
- 5 Solar geoengineering falsely portrayed as particularly relevant for the most climate-vulnerable populations
- 6 Falsely portraying that Solar geoengineering can be a temporary stopgap/measure to gain time
- 7 Ill-founded beliefs that 'global governance structures can be set up to manage the deployment of the technology over long periods of time
- 8 Naïve portrayal of the technology as neutral and possible to govern democratically
- 9 Dangerous and inaccurate framing that promotes real-world research and experimentation as 'neutral', while portraying rejection as extreme
- 10 Efforts to advance SRM despite existing ethical and legal restrictions

DEBUNKED

SRM is a perfect excuse for delay and inaction for the fossil industry and other polluters. False hopes that SRM will save us in the future delay and avoid actions now – hence reducing the likelihood for real transformation.

The risks of deployment are huge, including:

Ozone Layer Depletion: Stratospheric Aerosol Injection may contribute to increased depletion of the ozone layer.

Altered Weather Patterns: Severe changes in weather patterns, particularly around the tropics and subtropics are likely to occur, including risk of a wrecked monsoon with implications for billions of people.

Solar geoengineering will not work: Proponents routinely suggest solar geoengineering would provide the ability to dial down the warming effects of the sun in supposedly controlled ways. This idea has been repeatedly debunked as a myth by the scientific community. In reality, the technology would further destabilize an already deeply disturbed climate system.

There is no plan B. Given the risks and ungovernability of SRM, there is only a plan A: deep transformation of our societies with rapid and equitable phase out of fossil fuels.

This simple/reductionist **"risk-risk framing" is gravely misleading.** There are numerous, transformative actions that can be taken to minimize impacts of climate change with the precautionary principle at heart.

In reality, those most vulnerable to climate change would also be **most vulnerable to SRM impacts and failed geoengineering interventions.**

Threat of "termination shock" can be as bad or worse than climate change itself; If deployment suddenly stops, a rapid and likely catastrophic pent-up warming would be triggered. Once initiated, generations or centuries of continued deployment of the technology will be locked in, even as negative effects abound.

Solar geoengineering is likely ungovernable. It requires fail-safe governance systems to guarantee that catastrophic termination shock never happens. There is no justification in the human experience to safely assume this is possible.

While 'restrictive' governance, i.e. non-use agreements, bans and moratoria are possible and desirable, 'enabling' governance to manage actual deployment can not be assumed to work.

Solar geoengineering carries inherent risks of **wars and conflicts** over who should 'control the thermostat' and even risks of **weaponization** of the technology.

Geopolitical superpowers are not going to allow smaller and poor countries to have any say in the deployment and management of such dangerous and powerful technologies.

Commercial interests are already lining up to profit from the technology, including through scams such as "cooling credit" off-setting.

Rejection and non-use are aligned with the precautionary principle and a common sense approach similar to society's rejection of other risky and unacceptable technologies, such as eugenics and chemical weapons. Real-world research and technology development is a slippery slope towards deployment.

Violating Existing Moratorium: Development of solar geoengineering is inconsistent with legal obligations and principles under international human rights and environmental law, including the de-facto moratorium under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

[More on SRM and CAN's position](#)

We urge everyone to reject solar geoengineering and join us and numerous organisations, social movements and academics in endorsing the call for an **International Solar Geoengineering Non-Use Agreement.**

Endorse at solargeoeng.org



This brief acknowledges and draws on work pioneered by Indigenous peoples and climate justice groups.

