



## GFA CLIMATE & ENERGY CLUSTER DAYS 2021

### EDITORIAL

'Climate' and 'energy' are buzz words all around the globe these days. At GFA in Hamburg, too, these terms were passionately debated during the company's first Climate and Energy Cluster Days on 28-29 Sept, 2021. GFA established this cluster in early 2019 to address the demand for feasible solutions in adapting to and mitigating climate change. It serves as an internal platform for cooperation and exchange across the GFA Group to enable the required mix of technical, institutional and financial advisory and project management services, which directly respond to the specific needs of clients and partners. When wrapping up the Climate & Energy Cluster Days 2021, several key take-aways come to mind. The event's concept clearly worked out and led to the intended personal and thematic exchange across the GFA Group. The creative interaction and the spirit of dedication towards the climate cause and the Sustainable Development Goals among over

120 participating colleagues on Day 1 were impressive.

On Day 2, nine guest keynote speakers inspired the audience with highly interesting insights that triggered valuable discussions. Thus, the thematic panels were clearly a highlight of the Climate & Energy Cluster Days for GFA colleagues and guests attending live at the studio or online from afar in Germany and abroad. Organizing the thematic panel events in a hybrid format with web-based livestreams was an exciting and successful first-time experience at the GFA Campus. This whets the appetite for more and similar events to come.

Anja Desai, Managing Director



**For two days in late September, the GFA head offices in Volksdorf felt like a beehive with people bustling about in all directions, hunting for information. An external film crew, large monitors and cables provided proof of GFA's digitization efforts in documenting the event. The key words 'climate' and 'energy' could be heard again and again within the hallways, coffee corners, a lounge and a purpose-built outdoor 'watering hole' for chats and reflections.**

The buzz was all about the GFA's first Climate and Energy Cluster Days. On 28 Sept 2021, more than 120 colleagues from various GFA companies across the GFA Group in Hamburg, Berlin, Königstein, Belgrade and from as far away as Cape Town showcased and discussed the competencies and services they provide in projects and advisory mandates in three market

places that aim at limiting climate change and coping with its impacts in our partner countries and in Germany. This was a unique opportunity for all participants to come together and identify the untapped potential for cooperation to further enhance GFA Group's contribution to the climate and sustainable development priorities in international cooperation via personal interaction.

On the next day, GFA tried out a hybrid event format for the first time – three thematic panel discussions on selected topics in a conference venue transformed into a TV studio with approximately 30 live guests were streamed live on screens at the GFA Campus in Hamburg-Volksdorf and shared with an online audience through MS Teams.

## DAY 1 ▲ GFA MARKET PLACES



On Day 1, a total of 19 teams presented interventions related to GFA services and competencies in highly interactive formats such as presentations, moderated discussions, a fictitious country case, quizzes, videos, posters, a treasure hunt, virtual reality experiences, working groups, and more.

The morning market was dedicated to GFA's Climate & Energy Services with six market stalls put up across the GFA Campus, focusing on Climate Strategies & Policies, Low Carbon & Circular Economy, Renewable Energies & Energy Efficiency, All Things Urban, Green Finance, and Agriculture, Forestry & Other Land Use (AFOLU). Participants engaged in lively and at times controversial discussions on how and in which sectors best to raise ambitions for the **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)** of a fictitious country, Greentopia, to reduce GHG emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. A critical point of discussion emerged on how GHG emissions need to be measured, reported and verified (**MRV**) in order to satisfy the level of transparency required under the Paris Agreement. They challenged their own knowledge with quizzes and games on the content and services currently provided by various business units to promote a **circular economy**, value chains for plastic waste and **recycling**, or **waste management**. In a series of mini-events related to on-going activities with regard to **Renewable Energies and Energy Efficiency**, they watched a video on GFA's current service portfolio, designed creative approaches on how to make GFA an energy champion at the GFA Campus, and underwent a thematic 4-station treasure hunt to win small prizes.

The team **All Things Urban** held a number of surprises up their sleeves to involve their visitors in lively discussions on the challenges and service needs related to climate-resilient urban development, planning and managing resilient urban infrastructure, including energy, housing, water and waste, seminal mobility concepts and e-mobility, greening cities as well as disaster risk prevention and management. The beer bike was certainly one of the highlights at this market stall, highly frequented to stage discussions concerning mobility and the services provided by GFA Group.

The **Green Finance** team used a quiz, posters and movies to present topics such as sustainable green finance and related green financing facilities, green financial products, or green taxonomy. The AFOLU team mapped out GFA's worldwide climate- and biodiversity-related activities and pro-



jects in agriculture, forestry, and other land use by means of a moderated poster exhibition and a discussion on exemplary projects and approaches.

The afternoon market started with a focus on **Internal Cooperation Platforms and Approaches** to facilitate cooperation between the various business and support units in the GFA Group. The second round of market interventions was reserved to learn about specific business models at GFA Group through which GFA makes an additional contribution to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

In this context, GFA's technical working groups on **Climate Change, Green & Circular Economy**, and on **Resilient Cities, Transport & Mobility** showcased their role as internal think tanks and incubators to develop approaches and solutions, particularly at the thematic interfaces between relevant business units. They used this opportunity to get feedback on specific questions from their visiting colleagues. The **Recruiting Department** presented their recently launched collaborative approach to best capture required cross-cutting climate-specific qualifications in identifying experts that simultaneously provide the required depth of technical specialization for a particular vacancy or assignment.

**Digitized climate services** were the focus of a busy market stall with visitors literally queuing for a virtual reality experience with journeys to

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the tropical rainforest and the polar ice of Antarctica. They were equally impressed by the digital and distance learning concepts developed and applied by GFA's [C<sup>3</sup> Unit for Better Learning](#) and the data collection, management and analytical tools such as [DACOTA](#) developed at [GFA B.I.S.](#) in cooperation with the GFA's Digital Innovation Unit.

Most of the colleagues at GFA are primarily involved in service contract-based technical assistance in international development cooperation. They curiously visited the afternoon market for its second round to learn about the work of specialized units and companies within GFA Group that have a dedicated focus on climate finance instruments, on support to climate-related programs of public institutions and ministries in Germany and Europe, or on respective direct interventions with the private sector. This triggered lively discussions on the involvement of GFA's Climate Competence Center and [HEAT](#) in [climate finance programs such as IKI, SEA, NAMA or the GCF](#) on topics such as REDD+, green hydrogen, cooling or the Article 6 Mechanism under the Paris Agreement, and on the potential to engage further climate know-how at the Group in such programs.

Participants learned about [structured blended finance approaches](#) and other [innovative finance mechanisms](#) such as Climate Adaptation Notes, with which GFA helps investment projects for climate-resilient infrastructure become bankable and facilitates private sector funding, particularly in Southern Africa. They also exchanged intensively on how to transfer GFA expertise and networks in development cooperation into [Projekt-Consult's](#) recently launched [SDG advisory services](#) along private sector value chains related to mining and mineral resources.

Participants showed particular interest in the potential for cooperation and synergies towards climate change mitigation and adaptation, which was highlighted by several [public and private sector support facilities](#) currently managed by GFA Group members. Four support facilities presented their work for the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Initiative and the German National Designated Entity for the Climate Technology Mechanism, both under the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi), the Bilateral Cooperation and the International Forestry Programs under the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL), as well as for the industry-based H2Global Foundation and its funding platform HINT.CO to implement the H2Global Fund provided by BMWi to ramp up the green hydrogen market.

## DAY 2 ▲ PANEL DISCUSSIONS

 During Day 2, on 29 Sept 2021, nine keynote speakers from various institutions and organizations provided impressive and insightful impulses for three lively moderated panel discussions. Except for one expert, who was cut in online via MS Teams, the panels interacted directly with the studio guests.

### CLIMATE POLICIES AND PRIORITIES AT COP 26

The first panel on Climate Policies and Priorities at COP 26 was opened by [Andreas Nieters, GIZ](#), with an overview of Climate Policy Priorities from a German Development Cooperation Perspective. He focused on issues and conflict lines related to climate policy priorities. He specified the role and contribution of GIZ at the COP and highlighted the relevance of COP outcomes for the GIZ climate portfolio. Key issues of his presentation were the market and financing mechanisms linking climate change with the biodiversity agenda.

In his keynote Pathways to Net-Zero: Key Technologies and Policies, [Jan Kiso](#) of [BMW](#) pointed out that the German government's new climate targets will be pursued through a multi-layered German industrial policy including, inter alia, carbon pricing, a hydrogen strategy, and the Circular Economy Initiative. He stated that energy transition, and a decarbonized power sector in particular, is key for a 'green' industry with a growing demand for renewables that, for example, enables the production of green hydrogen.

[Herbert Christ, GIZ](#), offered insights into Nature-based Solutions (NbS) for Climate Change and Biodiversity in Development Cooperation with a particular focus on the AFOLU sector. Using cost-effective and readily available ecosystem-based approaches, NbS promise a triple win generating benefits in climate, biodiversity, and human well-being, challenges that NbS can address simultaneously. The AFOLU sector contributes about 23% of anthropogenic GHG emissions. Yet, finance remains a bottleneck as NbS only receive a small share of international climate and very little private finance.

The discussion after the three presentations concluded that market-based instruments and trade can be effective in achieving climate policies and priorities. Climate finance remains a challenge and a





From left to right: Jan Ole Kiso (BMW), Sonja Kotin-Förster (Moderator), Herbert Christ (GIZ), Andreas Nieters (GIZ)

bottleneck for most sectors and particularly in less developed countries. In addition, “How to use the money?” appeared a major question. There was unilateral agreement that civil society needs to continue to apply “pressure from the streets” as “climate change is the talk of the day”. An international Green Deal and a zero cap for the emissions trading system to reduce energy emissions are urgently needed to effectively address the global climate crisis.

### RESILIENT CITIES AND GREEN RECOVERY IN THE URBAN CONTEXT

In the second panel, Resilient Cities and Green Recovery in the Urban Context, **Alexander Jachnow** from the **Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies at Erasmus University Rotterdam** started off with an orientation on Urban Planning in the Context of Climate Change. Nature is under threat by cities, and cities are under threat by nature, he stated, that the global response is a vision of sustainability with resilient cities defined as “the capacity ... within a city to survive, adapt, and grow no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks” it experiences. As 95% of urban expansion in the next decades will take place within developing nations, the Sustainable Development Goal 11 related to inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities implies common challenges while lacking resources, strong governance, capacities and overlapping requirements for resilience towards pandemics. Several case studies highlighted the golden rules for resilience: Monitor and adapt, do more with less, seize opportunities,

design for failure, work in partnership, and accelerate the uptake of new technology while stimulating innovation.

**Katrin Brübach** of the **Resilient City Network**, working with 100 cities in 47 countries, passionately reviewed the state of Resilience for the Urban Poor. Cities have significant vulnerabilities but also great knowledge through experience. Cities already challenged by known stressors are increasingly vulnerable to catastrophic shocks while facing financial distress and a major gap in investment. As 75% of the world’s populations will live in cities by 2050, these problems will certainly increase. Smart, green investments and interventions within the overarching principles of resilience can create a triple dividend by developing local economies, improving equity, and prepare communities for inevitable climate threats. Fundamental principles for a resilient recovery are, inter alia, an explicit equity and

inclusion focus rooted in community solutions that utilize collective power and the strength of networks for integrated and holistic interventions. Systems thinking needs to be incorporated into decision-making, taking into account shocks and stresses. Infrastructure needs to adapt to new and unforeseen challenges by planning for uncertainty.

**Prof. Jens Bley** of **ANN RADAR** at **HafenCity University** in Hamburg provided captivating examples of Smart Cities – Urban Testbeds for Sustainability and Climate Action. Urban arenas offer location-based tangible experiences that call for ANN – A New Normal. Action fields focus on sustainable mobility, energy-efficient buildings, and solar energy development. ANN RADAR in Hamburg works with stakeholder ecosystems such as the mayor’s offices, districts, or civil society organizations, sharing prototypes, pilots, key performance indicators (KPIs), transfers, and new urban narratives. Yet, despite 600 public participation climate action suggestions in Hamburg, none were realized so far.

“Resilient cities are a journey, not a state”, a cross-cutting, not a sector issue – that was one of the remarkable conclusions from the round of discussion on the three presentations. “Resilience has to be equitable” was another wrap up because vulnerable social groups are most seriously affected by climate risks. Again, finance was considered an issue

From left to right: Katrin Brübach (Resilient City Network), Jan Prothmann (GFA), Prof. Jens Bley (HafenCity University)





From left to right: Marius Strotjohan (GIZ), Kirsten Schümer (Renewable Energy Hamburg), Timo Bollerhey (H2 Global Advisory), Ulrich Theuerkauf (GFA)

in combination with the question "How and where is it allocated?" but experimental readiness does not only rely on it.

## GREEN H2

In the last panel, Green H2, **Marius Strotjohan** of **GIZ** assessed Green Hydrogen & Power-to-X – Hype or Opportunities in Partner Countries? In some sectors green H2 and PtX products are the only sustainable alternative to fossil energy and base chemicals but their usage remains inefficient, expensive and, as of today, not economically feasible. Hence, the application of green hydrogen and its derivatives must be part of a coherent decarbonization strategy including long-term storage for renewable power. These products will become base material in the chemical, petroleum and steel industries, and fuel for aviation and shipping. The opportunities for GIZ partner countries are limited as there are no feasible business cases for these technologies yet. But the potential to develop an export market to Europe and towards enhancing energy self-sufficiency definitely exists. GIZ puts a focus on a few particularly suitable developing and emerging countries such as Chile, South Africa, Brazil and the MENA region. Ultimately, ramp-up programs such as H2Global can create a market for green hydrogen and its derivatives.

In her keynote address, Green H2 in the Hamburg Metropolitan Region – Developments and Perspectives, **Kirsten Schümer** introduced **Renewable Energy Hamburg** as a business cluster with 200 members, companies and institutions covering a unique renewable energy landscape. Cluster activities encompass networking, marketing and trade fairs, including international delegation visits and trips, European projects, and special matchmaking events. The national and the Northern German Hydrogen Strategy focus on future energy systems for industry, transport and aviation, as well as the import of green hydrogen. There are competitive advantages for the coastal federal states in Northern Germany due to their wind power generation capacities, subterranean storage formations, seaports, and the maritime industry. As a matter of fact, hydrogen is nothing new for Hamburg – its Green Hydrogen Hub with accessibility for overseas ship-

ping as a hydrogen import terminal is a great starting point to ramp up a hydrogen economy. The Hamburg Hydrogen Network with 12 companies aims at producing green hydrogen to decarbonize industry and the mobility sector. Northern German Living Lab entails 25 projects, eight electrolysis plants and more than 100 partners from industry, science and politics. Because of high costs and low efficiency, hydrogen is not the "silver bullet" to solve all the energy decarbonization needs. Therefore, a focus should be put on the metal and steel producing industry, the chemical sector and long distance transportation

**Timo Bollerhey** of the **H2Global Advisory**, the GFA Group's most recent member, introduced H2Global – The Green H2 Market Ramp-up Mechanism. BMWi initiated this finance mechanism to promote green hydrogen and its derivatives as a key energy source on the road to decarbonizing key sectors in Germany. The German government supports the green H2 market ramp-up through a fund to compensate price differences between supply from outside the EU and offtake in Germany with up to 900 million euros over ten years. The industry-based H2Global Foundation in Hamburg sets up the competitive dialogue as a bidding format to provide off-take agreements and oversees the eventual implementation of the H2Global instrument by its special purpose entity HINT.CO – Hydrogen Intermediary Network Company. The H2Global Advisory manages the H2Global Foundation and its subsidiary HINT.CO as a trustee.

The three presentations were followed by a heated discussion on whether H2 is "the new oil" (replacing carbon energy sources), "the champagne of the energy transition" (because it is so expensive), or the "the new sparkling water" of future energy supply (because it needs to be made cheaper). Two points went undisputed: For a mechanism like H2Global, unified certification standards for exporters and importers are vital, and Germany should learn from the solar business case of twenty years prior, when the country appeared to be a world leader that China subsequently outperformed.

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# GFA CLIMATE & ENERGY CLUSTER DAYS 2021

## INTERVIEW WITH DANIEL WAHBY, HEAD OF CLIMATE & ENERGY CLUSTER



### *Why did GFA organize the Climate and Energy Cluster Day?*

The idea of the Climate & Energy Cluster Days 2021 was to open up a space for our colleagues from the various companies in the GFA Group to exchange and learn about the competencies and services that aim at reducing global warming and increase the resilience against the resulting climate change in our partner countries.

The event was about getting a deeper insight into what is behind buzz words so often cited in this context, for example NDCs, ETS, ITMOS and CBAM, REDD+ or AFOLU, e-mobility, energy efficiency, mini grids and green hydrogen, net zero, low carbon and circular economy, or structured blended finance, green bonds and climate adaptation notes. Of course, a major concern of the event was to identify the potential for cooperation between GFA business units that enhance our services as a meaningful contribution toward achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement. To this end, we need to take a collaborative effort, in which we certainly rely on the exchange with like-minded partners. The Climate & Energy Cluster Days 2021, therefore, also aimed at providing a platform to discuss pressing challenges and topics related to climate policies, resilience and green

recovery, and respective approaches and technologies with invited guests from relevant organizations and companies within Germany and abroad.

### *In your personal assessment – what were the highlights during the two days?*

After such a long period of working from home while meeting and collaborating virtually, the mere fact that we could have an event with so many participants actively interacting across the GFA campus was a highlight in itself. Participants had to be either fully vaccinated against or fully recovered from Covid-19, but we remained grateful that this was possible at all. The weather also played along so that many market place sessions and the enjoyable evening party on the first day could take place outside in the courtyard.

I was impressed with the dedicated creativity shown by all the teams across the GFA Group while presenting and sharing their broad range of expertise and services on climate issues and green recovery. This was most evident at the market place on Day 1, which triggered the exchange and personal interaction needed to keep up with the challenges in our work.

The thematic key notes and subsequent panel discussions on Day 2 were certainly a highlight of the Climate & Energy Cluster Days 2021. Not only did we choose an event format completely new to us, i.e. livestreaming in a studio situation, allowing 130 participants to log in at peak hours. What made the Cluster Days a truly special event was the fascinating and inspiring inputs by the nine guest speakers and the lively discussions.

### *Which conclusions do you draw for GFA's future work?*

The presentations, interaction and exchange at the market place have certainly reinforced our understanding that we at GFA Group are committed to achieve what has been agreed in Paris. Looking at the complexity of the challenges, emphasized also by the guest speakers on Day 2, feasible and effective solutions need to address problems that often lie at thematic, technical, financial or institutional interfaces. Therefore, GFA's future work will clearly focus on respective competencies, services and suitable business models including digital solutions for their application. We will build on the expertise already available across the Group, and we will continue to reach out to other like-minded organizations and partner companies in order to increase our impact. I believe that the Climate & Energy Cluster Days 2021 were another good step in this direction.



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