Introduction
The Climate Governance study
Power, equity and accountability in global climate change governance is a three-year ESRC-funded research project that investigates the governance and accountability of institutions at three levels of decision making: global institutions (IBRD, WHO and WTO), bilateral donors (IDF) and aid-recipients (Government of Ghana). The research is conducted with reference to two 'triple issues' — technology, governance and population dynamics — and has four phases:
1. Assessing the accountability capabilities of the study organisations
2. Exploring the preparedness of the study institutions to respond to climate change issues
3. Assessing the responsiveness of the Government of Ghana to climate change challenges
4. Developing a new conceptual framework for understanding development in the context of climate change.

In this poster we present preliminary findings from the first two phases focussing on the three global multilateral institutions. We respond to the following research questions:

- To measure the accountability capabilities of case-study institutions
- To understand the views and engagement of organisational actors in climate change discourse, policy development and related activities

Case study organisations
The project focuses on three key actors in global climate change governance, namely:

- The World Bank (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, IBRD) as a global research, programme, and funding body in development and climate change, and increasingly a manager and governing body for global climate finance
- The World Health Organization (WHO) as a key policy maker and standards setter in the domain of population dynamics and health
- The World Trade Organization (WTO) as a regulator and adjudicator in issues of global trade affecting access to energy and technology for both developing and developed countries

Phase 1: Accountability assessment
The Global Accountability Framework
The project uses a qualitative scoring framework, developed and applied over many years by the One World Trust, for measuring different levels of organisational policies and management systems. It is based on over 50 graded good practice-based indicators, grouped by five mutually-reinforcing dimensions of accountability, shown in the figure below.

The key dimensions of the Pathways to Accountability Framework

Participation: All three organisations showed major disparities between their capability to be accountable to external stakeholders and the power they afford their members through internal member control policies and systems. All organisations performed poorly on the issue of dealing with external participation. In particular the unmitigated unequal voting rights in the IBRD’s governing body, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) from which all members are admitted, lowered those organisations’ scores.

Evaluation: The IBRD stands out as being very capable in this dimension, while the WTO performs poorly because it evaluates only on its technical assistance activities, while the IBRD has an objective of improving its performance and making it more funtionally effective. The WHO has a greater capacity to improve in this area, and the fact that it is currently going through the approval phases for a new evaluation policy may help.

Complaints & response: The IBRD is much further ahead in this area than the other organisations and displays a good level of capability. The WHO is the next-best performing organisation, and performs fairly well on whistle-blower complaints, but very poorly on complaints from external stakeholders. The WTO does not have a policy or quality management systems in place to handle complaints from external stakeholders, and its whistle-blower policy is very weak.

Phase 2: How do organisations engage with climate change?

Eight in-depth qualitative interviews, using respondent-specific topic guides, have been conducted with senior representatives in the three global organisations between 3 November and 12 December 2008. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, coded using atlas.ti software, and finally analysed using a framework approach. In addition, documents relating to the organisations’ structures and missions were also reviewed.

Preliminary findings
Preliminary findings from the global organisations show that similar factors affect the way in which these organisations engage with climate change. These factors include the organisations’ missions, legal frameworks and accountability capabilities. However, if stakeholders and the three organisations studied demonstrate significant differences in the way in which they engage with climate change as a result of divergent organisational powers and the power and interests of the different internal and external stakeholders involved.

World Bank
Mission: The IBRD’s mission is “to reduce poverty in middle-income and creditworthy poorer countries”. In 2008, the World Bank (WBG) launched a “green” investment strategy, promoting development in the context of climate change, focused on ensuring that developmental gains are not lost due to climate change.

Leadership: Climate change became a priority of the World Bank leadership under the current President. In 2010, the President created the position of Special Envoy for Climate Change and was available to address with the topic. “Round the time of the Bali COP... was probably the point at which... the [Bank]’s interest in climate change really took off, and the Bank began to engage with this in a much more serious way”. To start, you would accordingly bring in people who could deal with some of these issues.”

Structures: Created in 2010, the Special Envoy for Climate Change (SECG) is a Vice-Presidential-level coordination role. Because the President wanted one person who would be “fed up to focus on one thing [climate change] because it’s so important, across the whole piece”. The Envoy engages in the global dialogue and helps to set strategy and oversee implementation. The Envoy works with staff within the WBG in addition to Country Directors who are largely responsible for implementation. There are specific research programmes and teams working on climate change including the Climate Change Team, the Climate Finance and Carbon Market Group, and the Climate Investment Fund unit.

World Health Organization
Mission: The WHO’s main function is “to safeguard the health of all people, by providing for all of the highest possible level of health”. The WHO regards its role in climate change governance as representing the health field’s position on the protection of health through policy development and global support. In 2008, the World Health Assembly (WHA) adopted a resolution on climate change and health, which gave the WHO a formal mandate to work on climate change.

Leadership: In 2007, the Director-General of the WHO identified climate change as a priority for the organisation, leading to wider discussion on how WHO could contribute. Nowhere, “...some of our work has been doing more on already and that we were behind the game...” WHO recognises health has been ‘bit forgotten’ in the climate change debate, and there is acknowledgment that “initially it was mainly the health sector’s fault for not engaging properly for a long time.” It remains unclear whether or not all global organisations within the WHO should take a more formal responsibility for climate change issues — it does not work with the World Bank for example, and evidently finds it difficult to engage with the UNFCCC (the UN climate change body) now so well established that it is difficult to change the ‘central focus’.

Structures: The Department of Public Health and Environment (PHS) Secretariat is responsible for the Secretariat’s involvement in climate change, including advising other WHO departments engaging in research. The DG’s decision to make climate change a priority is seen internally as the main incentive for other departments to work with the PHE.

World Trade Organization
Mission: The WTO’s mission is to “open trade for the benefit of all”. While the organisation does not have a particular remit to address climate change, it is widely acknowledged that the WTO recognises that members should have regard for the objective of sustainable development. There is a strong view in the organisation that climate change and trade are separate dimensions of the same issue, the WTO can only engage with climate change in a limited way, primarily by reducing barriers to trade in environmentally-friendly goods and services, and by bringing climate change to the WTO’s agenda.

Leadership: As a convening organisation the WTO is strongly “members-driven”, and all member states must agree in order for new policies to be introduced. The WTO’s position has been to lower the profile of certain issues through its research programme, decided by the Director-General, but “until consensus is reached amongst members, the Secretariat’s role is to remain neutral to the different decisions of the member states. […] we have to reflect the divergence that there are across our member states on any particular issue.”

Structures: Climate change issues relating to trade can be discussed in the Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE) and the Committee on Trade and Sustainable Development (CTEDS). Both committees are supported by the Trade and Environment Division of the WTO Secretariat. In practice, however, many developing countries try to keep discussion of climate-related trade issues (e.g. carbon taxes) limited to the UNFCCC fora where their interests will not be overpowered by developed nations: “because when you discuss WTO, you know an organisation of laying comes in […] I think that climate change you go back to this principle of common but different responsibilities. […] So they may have some concerns.”

Emerging conditions for organisational responsiveness and accountability
Although preliminary, our findings indicate a number of factors that influence whether and how international organisations engage and respond to the new challenges associated with climate change. These factors include leadership (manifest in high-level speeches and organisational change), internal organisational structures and accountability capacity (for flexible engagement across sectors and multiple stakeholders), policies and management systems, and the ability to build relationships with critical stakeholders across states, civil society groups, knowledge communities, etc.

Strong leadership within the WBG and a cross-cutting remit for its Special Envoy for Climate Change have enabled the organisation to achieve a significant global presence in climate governance. Yet the usual framework of its members in decision-making is a challenge to the accountability of its decisions. While the organisations are engaged in the global dialogue and rarely engage with other key players or sectors. The power of WTO’s members is decisive in terms of its engagement with climate change. Even on trade-related climate relevant topics, many developing countries would prefer such discussions take place in the UNFCCC, so these issues are rarely discussed, and the organisation finds it difficult to engage in a priority area as the main incentive for other departments to work with the PHE.