
# Thematic Report

# Public Engagement Session May 2012

A report from the European CCS Demonstration Project Network

Website version

Proceedings from the Cottbus knowledge sharing event 24th/25th May 2012

## Summary

This report presents the discussions, conclusions and actions agreed at a one-day thematic workshop on public engagement which was held at the Schwartze Pumpe power plant (Germany) on 24 May 2012.

The agenda for the meeting focussed on two main topics:

1. Perceived Risks
2. Stakeholder management

The perceived risks for all of the projects are from the storage elements rather than capture. The projects agreed on some key messages for best practice when dealing with perceived risks: which included good communication, transparency from the project, the need for government support for the project, and most importantly listening to the public.

The projects also discussed their stakeholders- both advocates and adversaries. Many projects found that local authorities, universities and MP's were good advocates of CCS, but others had difficulties with these groups. Most projects had some adversaries from the public and from some NGOs. The projects agreed on some key messages for best practice which included understanding of the stakeholders, stakeholder maps and contextualising the risks of CCS.

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## Introduction

This report presents the discussions, conclusions and actions agreed at a one-day thematic workshop on public engagement which was held at the Schwartze Pumpe power plant (Germany) on 24 May 2012. The workshop was one of three parallel tracks in the Network knowledge sharing event. The other thematic groups were storage and regulatory development.

All seven member projects were represented.

The agenda for the meeting focussed on two main topics

1. Perceived Risks

1. What is your strategy to deal with perceived HSE risks of solvents used in capture plants?
2. What is your strategy to deal with perceived HSE risks of $CO_2$ storage?
3. What is your strategy to deal with any negative public perception as a result of delayed or cancelled CCS projects?

2. Stakeholder management

Participants were to consider and present on the following questions:

1. Who are your top five stakeholders who are advocates of CCS and support your project?
2. What is your strategy for dealing with these stakeholders?
3. Who are your top five stakeholders who are adversaries of CCS, and are against the project?
4. What is your strategy for dealing with these stakeholders?

## Perceived Risks

Most of the project representatives gave a brief description of their project as an introduction to their presentation. These are not repeated here unless there has been an important new development.

The **Don Valley** (UK) project is a pre-combustion capture so does not face the perceived amine risks associated with post-combustion capture plants. In addition, its storage will be offshore so this doesn't raise the same local issues faced by onshore storage projects. Some stakeholders expressed curiosity about storage, but such questions are infrequent. The project is generally seen as having a value to the region and receives positive press coverage. Stakeholder management for the project is a well-structured activity (see next section). The pipeline part of the project is presently undertaking its Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

The situation at **Porto Tolle** (IT) had some similarities to Don Valley as there has been little objection to CCS specifically. However, the issue of coal burning causes a lot of objections by local environmental organizations as a result of possible pollution and its potential impact on the local environment. Public understanding and awareness of CCS is quite low in Italy and the project had to begin their engagement starting with "what is climate change" and why it is necessary to reduce the $CO_2$ emissions continuing with the explanation of CCS.

With regards to the use of the solvents, there aren't any specific communication activities. However, the divulgation materials on the capture technology and process include information on liquid solvents.

In Italy, while a completely different and unrelated technology, the perception of $CO_2$ storage often suffers from the stories relating to the disposal of nuclear waste. The storage for the Porto Tolle project is planned to be off-shore and therefore it is not a highly relevant issue for the population near Porto Tolle power plant for

the moment. The Veneto region is an importer of energy so the project is seen as having an economic and employment benefit.

The **Compostilla** (ES) project is an oxy-fuel plant so does not have an amine issue, as amines are not used at all. However storage is perceived to present a number of possible risks. The consensus from the project is that the use of overly technical language may negatively influence the debate. One of the main causes of opposition to CCS is a general lack of knowledge about the technology and why it is used. A recent survey showed that a person's impression of CCS improves after education and close to 80% of those surveyed thought that CCS could help mitigate climate change. The project has a very well developed stakeholder management activity (see next section).

The **ROAD** (NL) project reported that capture elements had an elevated profile following the "Statoil-Bellona dispute" on nitrosamines. A statement and factsheet on the topic was issued by the project and the perceived risk appears to have decreased. The project also promised to halt the capture of $CO_2$ if amine emission levels increased above a certain level. The storage for the ROAD Project is off-shore and therefore raises fewer concerns than it might do on-shore. The delay or cancellation of other demonstration projects is not a positive sign, nor is the European Commission's introduction of the term "delayed CCS". A new $CO_2$ tax - or "coal tax" - had just been introduced in the Netherlands.

The perceived risks relating to capture is not an important issue at **Belchatow** (PL) as many of the people in the area are employed at the power plant and are well informed about the technology. Perceived risks related to storage present the most difficult challenge. However, only one out of the seven communes around the possible storage site came out against site characterisation activity. This commune was the one that had been appraised and it had adopted a negative position to storage during the first phase of the research. Although the project tried to engage with the commune, they still do not have satisfactory results from the discussion. Some of the communes along the $CO_2$ transportation pipeline route preliminarily identified in the feasibility study had objected to there being storage sites in their locality, but were unconcerned about pipelines crossing their region. It is not yet clear if the local commune's negative opinion on storage could block the development of the storage site. Delays or cancellations of other demonstration projects have not so far had any impact (mainly because people are not following/informed about the cancelled projects). A far more challenging problem is the possibility of compensation for the local communities and what they might, or might not, expect.

There were no presentations on the **Sleipner** project (which has been in operation since 1996, so the risk issues are no longer debated by the public) or **Jänschwalde** (the project in Germany that was recently cancelled - detailed reports will be made available separately on the Network website).

## Summary of Session One – Key messages for best practice for dealing with perceived risk

1. The process for communicating is more important than content. Dialogue and listening is far more important than focusing on technicalities and process.

2. Projects have been criticised for fancy advertisement campaigns and glossy brochures – it is far more important to engage face to face with the local public.

3. The project must identify where common interests can be found and engage with stakeholders.

4. A project must be transparent and honest. Site visits to the power plant and capture unit are recommended.

5. Very carefully consider the language used. Some scientific or technical words can be very unhelpful.

6. It can be worth giving universities and academics access to project data. Their independent findings provide impartial credibility, but use communications experts to 'translate' the scientific language into something that can be easily understood.

7. Engineers should be given guidance if they are conducting public engagement actions, as they often refer to processes which can be too complicated for the public. Specific briefings and training on how to communicate with the public (next point) is beneficial.

8. Spend time training the project staff so that they have credibility (i.e. they are more than just a P.R. person) but can still speak in laymen's terms.

9. Prepare a common language and shared messaging for the entire team.

10. Public figures can be a helpful sponsor for a CCS project, particularly to 'open doors'. However they will not be considered as being 'independent' for long, and will eventually be labelled as being 'pro-CCS'.

11. The project must have government support.

12. Ensure that public engagement is 'led' by the project manager, and is a critical part of the management structure from the very beginning.

## Stakeholder Management

Stakeholders in the **Belchatow** projects who most strongly supported it are the local and regional authorities, scientists from local technical universities, the Polish Geological Institute and an NGO (Bellona). Representatives of these bodies are invited to all dissemination events, are consulted on brochures, leaflets etc. and take part in brainstorming sessions concerning public engagement strategy. Opposing the project are some local politicians, one local commune is against the storage aspect, some scientists from Krakow technical university and some regional and local NGOs (in particular those who strongly support the development of geothermal energy). These stakeholders are also invited to all events and are kept permanently informed of events concerning the project. Any questions or accusations made by these stakeholders are responded to directly by an expert. The project also monitors the media and tries to keep journalists happy by being available for comment. The main arguments against CCS in Poland are that it is an undemonstrated technology and Poland should use its already scarce resources to invest in known and already demonstrated technologies.

The **Porto Tolle** project strongly collaborates with the "CCS Observatory", an NGO launched by the Italian Sustainable Development Foundation which aims to promote the scientific collaboration, divulgation and the communication of CCS in Italy. For the promotion and public acceptance of CCS the project also collaborates with the Italian Ministry of the Environment, the Veneto Regional Administration, and scientific associations and CCS support groups. The main opponents are environmental NGOs operating in Italy, which are not against CCS itself but against CCS as an enabling factor for coal-firing plants. Enel participates in events and supports communication material on CCS; it also participates in working groups which are implementing the legal framework for CCS.

In Spain, the **Compostilla** project has very strong support from the local, regional and national authorities and from an active working group in close co-operation with Cuiden. The main regional universities are also supportive (signed agreement) and run summer courses and workshops on CCS. The project also has a very good relationship with the local media and the coal mining industry is strongly supportive. NGOs take a neutral position regarding the project. There are very few adversaries. There have been isolated instances of negative comments in the mass media, a small percentage of the population in Sahagún and two local property owners (one at each storage site). The main strategy with the stakeholders is communication and dialogue, preferably before the media gets involved. Information needs to go first to local authorities who have to be properly engaged. Key messages and key stakeholders needed to be identified as a first step and a suitable local presence is very desirable (a scientist in storage areas). Communications need to be based on transparency. National Government support is essential and it is useful that the positive messages about the project come from a respected research institute.

Stakeholder management at **Don Valley** is a comprehensive activity. Approaches are different depending on the different stakeholders. A formal approach is made to Government Departments, MPs and NGOs. Thematic groups have been set up for Executive Agencies, Local and Parish Councils and NGO groups and these are particularly involved in the preparation of the EIA for the pipeline. MPs, councils, the General Public, landowners and NGOs are all invited to exhibitions and consultations. The General Public and landowners along the preferred pipeline corridor participate in forums about the project and individual meetings are held with landowners. In addition, both National Grid and 2Co Energy have an ongoing dialogue with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) for the pipeline and power plant respectively.

Primary stakeholders in the **ROAD** project have been divided into four categories depending on their level of interest and level of influence. Each of the categories has been handled differently. The stakeholders with high interest and high influence are "closely managed". Those with high interest but relatively low influence - including a number of Civil and environmental NGOs are "kept satisfied". The high interest/low influence group are "kept informed" while the low interest/low influence group are "monitored".

The stakeholders most strongly supporting the **Jänschwalde** project were the Federal Governments of Brandenburg and Saxony-Anhalt, a number of regional interest groups, selected media, many national politicians and many local residents (together with R&D and technical partners and academia). Those against the project included "locals against $CO_2$", national NGOs, left-wing political parties, selected media and competitors from the renewable energies sector (in particular solar energy). Vattenfall developed a "stakeholder engagement model" which had proved useful. It was generally accepted that "direct contact with affected stakeholders provides new and valuable information for the project - with possible new ideas for solutions and procedures". The biggest mistakes by the project had been to underestimate the local opposition in the proposed storage area. In that region there was no coal production (unlike around the proposed capture plant) and Vattenfall was just one of four - not well trusted - utilities in the area. Nationwide, there was a swing against CCS and political support gradually faded away. In the end there was no support at the national political level and the Chancellor did not support the proposed CCS Law. Most of the debate on the safety of CCS was driven by those who opposed coal-fired electricity generation.

The topic had little relevance to the operating **Sleipner** project.

## Summary of Session Two – Key messages for best practice to communicate with stakeholders

1. Ensure that there is a really good understanding of the stakeholders so that you are not surprised further on in the project.

2. A project should have a detailed stakeholder map and a best practice guide for dealing with each stakeholder.

3. When engaging with the public, it is important to understand your audience.

4. A project should help stakeholders to contextualise risks.

5. Info-graphics can be a good tool, but check them for accuracy and scaling.

6. Explain what $CO_2$ is right from the start and don't use $CO_2$ and carbon dioxide interchangeably.

## Public Engagement with CCS: A different perspective

Derek Taylor (GCCSI) gave a brief summary of a workshop that had been organised by the Nottingham Centre for CCS (NCCCS) held on the subject topic on 21 May 2012. The different perspective was the involvement of a number of psychologists often involved in fields only marginally related to CCS, and very few technologists from the sector. It is very difficult to convince the public of the need for CCS as $CO_2$ is not an obvious "here and now pollution" (cf major killer smogs of the 1950s) nor do they "dread" climate change (anywhere near as much as, for example, genetically modified organisms (GMOs)). They find the technology more complicated than the "green" renewables and can feel anxiety about it. It was clear that educating the public does not always increase acceptance (a number of studies have shown the reverse).

A genuine dialogue is much more important than education - to give the public the opportunity to provide feedback. PR is usually see as people trying to sell you something you do not want and is not trusted. The messenger is important - friends and family are more trusted than "official" sources (though probably less accurate), much of the available information on the internet (for example) is from "untrusted" sources - though social networks (such as Facebook) are more trusted than a leaflet pushed through your door. The biggest hurdle appears to be the lack of a communications tool or tools. One suggestion had been (mirroring one made during the present meeting) was for an "e-learning platform", on which a wide range of different views on CCS could be expressed, and some interactive learning materials. Timing - or the lack of time - is a major constraint. Public opinion cannot be rushed - to try to do so only raises resistance. So start early!

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The European CCS Demonstration Project Network was established in 2009 by the European Commission to accelerate the deployment of safe, large-scale and commercially viable CCS projects. The Network that has been formed is a community of leading demonstration projects which is committed to sharing knowledge and experiences, and is united towards the goal of achieving safe and commercially viable CCS. The learnings that are gained will be disseminated to other projects, stakeholders and public to help gain acceptance of the technology – and support CCS to achieve its full potential as a vital technique in our fight against climate change.

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