

“Stakeholder engagement for successful CCS deployment: Considerations and lessons learned”

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Abstract

Previous experiences with a range of new science and technological innovations known to have some perceived risks or uncertainty associated with them, have shown that early public engagement can be critical if project proponents are to minimise the opportunity for social opposition delaying or halting a project. Carbon dioxide capture and storage (CCS) is one such technology - perceived by many as risky, despite most of its processes being used extensively by the oil and gas industry for years.

The recent experience of the Shell Storage B.V. project proposed for Barendrecht in the south of the Netherlands, is a good example where the perceived risks and lack of engagement can result in direct negative consequences for a project. Shell Storage B.V. began informing the public early about its planned project however it soon became apparent that the local government was strongly opposed to the project. Many of the local residents also raised questions and concerns in relation to the safety and risks of the project for public health. As a result there were requests for increased communication and information. However despite the best efforts of the project proponents, public opinion became so polarised that support for the project was withdrawn.

Additionally, one of the often promoted benefits of CCS is that by mitigating carbon dioxide from coal fired power stations and other industrial sources, it will secure the long term viability of coal fired power thereby increasing the overall security of supply for a country. However, in more recent times, the energy penalty associated with the learning curve of implementing CCS technologies has led some to question whether the energy security label is truly applicable.

For Japan, the above considerations, along with the lessons learnt from a number of international CCS projects mean that early stakeholder engagement will be critical. This presentation highlights a range of communication and engagement materials that have been developed to assist CCS projects at the earliest stages of implementation, and discusses their potential relevance and application in the Japanese context. It suggests that early engagement with key decision makers, internal stakeholders, local communities, regulators and potential partners will prove beneficial and provides concrete examples for CCS projects to apply in their local communities.