

PRESS RELEASE

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Step forward for CCS as new €4M European project aids understanding the long term fate of CO₂ storage

A new €4M European project to improve understanding of the most effective ways to store CO₂ has been hailed as a big step forward for carbon capture and storage (CCS).

UltimateCO₂, a four-year project involving researchers and industry experts from across Europe, will significantly advance understanding of the long-term fate of CO₂ when captured and stored in geological formations as part of the CCS process.

It will cover detailed lab, field and modelling studies of the main physical and chemical processes involved and their impacts in the long-term including: trapping mechanisms of CO₂ in geological formations; fluid-rock interactions and effects on the integrity of caprocks that seal CO₂ stores; and leakage due to lack of integrity of operating or abandoned wells.

Proponents of CCS believe that it is an essential technology that will be required to be deployed over the next few decades if the world is to meet its greenhouse gas reduction and energy supply aims cost effectively. However, critics claim that the long-term assurance of geologically stored CO₂ with a very high degree of certainty is still unproven.

Dr Pascal Audigane from the Bureau de Recherches Géologiques et Minières, who is coordinating the project said, "CO₂ has been captured as part of the CCS process for many years, and has been stored in geological structures without incident. For example, 1 million metric tonnes of CO₂ per year captured from the Sleipner gasfield in Norway has been injected into the adjacent Utsira saline aquifer deep under the sea for the last 16 years. UltimateCO₂ will take a rigorous approach to understanding the long-term stability of CO₂ associated with this storage."

ULTimateCO₂ will develop recommendations for operators and regulators of CO₂ storage sites to provide a higher degree of certainty over the long term performance of storage sites. The outcomes of the project will be disseminated widely to a broad audience including policy makers and regulators, storage developers, investors, the scientific community and representatives of civil society. This will improve public understanding of CO₂ storage and CCS.

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Notes to editors

The ULTimateCO₂ project is co-ordinated by BRGM in France and the consortium consists of: IFP Energies Nouvelles, Geogreen and Phimeca Engineering in France, BRG and EIFER in Germany, TNO and the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands, IGG-CNR in Italy, GEUS in Denmark and BGS and CO₂Sense in the UK.

Further information on the project can be found at www.ultimateco2.eu

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