

WRI CCS Community Engagement Guidelines:

Fourth Working Group Call Summary

Call Date and Time: Thursday June 18, 11 AM EDT

Discussion Topic: Information Access and Process

Discussion Questions:

1. Group Discussion: Access to Information
 - What does a community need to know about a proposed project?
 - Are there existing frameworks for public registries that will work for CCS?
 - Can industry provide that information to the public?
 - What is the role of government in providing this information?
 - What guidelines can we draft to outline information access that can be provided in the community engagement?
2. Group Discussion: Information Process
 - How is information given to the public?
 - What are the rules and regulations for community engagement and how do they influence this process?
 - What are the modes of engaging the public?
 - When should the public be engaged?
 - What guidelines can we draft regarding this process (for each audience segment)?
 - Review working definition: A Transparent Process

For reference during discussion: Definition of Transparent Process

Transparent Process: A process that entails timely, open and candid engagement with communities when required during the different stages of the project life cycle.

Call Attendees:

Jason Anderson, World Wildlife Fund E.U.

Sarah Forbes, World Resources Institute

Lori Gauvreau, Schlumberger Carbon Services

Josh Habib, Cadmus Group

Sean McCoy, Carnegie Mellon University

Gary McNeil, United States Environmental Protection Agency

Mark Northam, University of Wyoming

Karen Obenshain, Edison Electric Institute

Andrea Feldpausch-Parker, Texas A&M University/South-West Regional Partnership

Chris Smith, Environmental Defense Fund
Amanda Stevens, New York State Energy Research and Development Authority
Lindsey Tollefson, Big Sky Regional Partnership
Preeti Verma, World Resources Institute
Sarah Wade, AJW Group

Key Outcomes of discussion:

- The information about a project that a community may want to know varies based on their interest and level of understanding about the issue. There are examples where communities have asked in-depth questions regarding proposed CCS projects
- Understand the role of different actors in communicating information as some sources are more trusted than others
- Present the information to the communities in the most easily understandable way
- Conduct small one-on-one meeting with communities before holding public hearings as communities are more open about sharing their concerns in such settings. Open dialogue with communities is crucial in establishing rapport
- There are pros and cons of using social media as a communication tool

What do communities want to know about a proposed project?

- What communities want to know about a project varies from community to community depending on the level of education and awareness
- In some situations, communities not only want to know basic information about how a project works, but they are also interested in knowing about the company proposing the project and the benefits of proposed activity to them
- Issues communities ask about include:
 - risk and emergency response
 - water contamination
 - liability
 - landowner compensation (especially in areas where landowners are compensated for natural gas compensation storage).
 - Electricity rate increase to citizens
 - Financial assurance
 - CCS policy
 - Long-term stewardship issues. What happens 50 or 100 years from now when there is a leak or an earthquake? What if technology advances to the point where those aquifers are a valuable water resource at some point in the future, will community members be compensated at that point? What are the long term impacts? Will the owner/operator walk away from the project?

Important Considerations while Communicating with Public

- Prepare in advance and think creatively about ways to engage communities for e.g. Simple animation created in Illinois showing how technology works, enabled community to understand various underground CO₂ storage mechanisms.
- It is important to involve the public (maybe a few key community members) in the initial planning of any communication strategy. If we don't know what the public wants to know and where there are gaps and misconceptions in their knowledge, we may not be able to communicate with them properly.
- Consider conducting forums to provide the communities with basic information about technology to enable one-on-one discussion on the issues citizens are concerned about.
- Consider holding open houses with posters prior to a formal public hearing
- Timing is a critical factor, as sometimes communities want answers before the researchers have them. e.g., some communities want to know about where the plume will go even before modeling is done.

Role of various audiences in providing information to the public

Government

- Some stakeholders noted that Government representatives are more successful, compared to project implementers, at communicating how CCS is similar to other industry operations to communities
 - Another important issue raised was whether or not it is possible for government to build communications into a funded project. Some governments do this already, by planning the outreach component as a part of the project.
 - DOE has put out a call for research hubs, one of which is around CCS. This could provide an opportunity to do (and fund) this education/outreach.
 - EPA has a programmatic interest in conducting outreach/public education around the issues of climate change and different aspects of mitigation technology. They are currently working on gearing up their communication strategy.
- **Comments about NEPA Process**
 - The public hearing under the NEPA process is an official meeting where the responses to public's concerns and questions may not be addressed satisfactorily. Generally during such meetings the questions are logged and then government responds at a later point. It is always useful and more successful to hold small one-on-one meetings prior to the official meeting.

NGO's

- NGOs have an important role to play in public communication but they have limited resources. An important question is who has the resources to do public education?

Universities

- Many stakeholders look at Universities for information and opinion on issues.
- Academics have credibility and ability to advise groups on both sides of the issue.
- There are many ways through which universities are instrumental in knowledge transfer and information exchange
- One major challenge is how to transfer technical information to public in an easily understandable way. It is sometimes difficult for technical folks particularly to be able to communicate with public in a simple language.
- There is an example of a University, conducting a series of workshops on different CCS issues. A wide range of stakeholders have been participating in these workshops including legislators, project implementers and local landowners. These workshops are very successful in providing one-on-one information to local communities. In addition, there is ongoing work on getting technical information translated into language everyone can understand. They are also working on a series of briefs on CCS that can be presented in a number of different ways and will act as “brain snacks” for kids.

Issue of Trust

- Lack of a responsible/trusted party to provide basic education on the technology identified as a major gap.
- The level of trust varies for different entities; for example, universities are more trusted than government. NGOs have trust within specific communities. Museums are also perceived as non-biased source of information.

What guidelines can we draft to outline information access that can be provided in the community engagement?

- Important to note that communities do not want nitty-gritty details. Challenge is to provide some kind of distillation to the information so that people can trust the information.

How information should be given to public?

- One major issue is how to successfully communicate technical information to public.

Role of social media

- Some stakeholders felt that one big problem associated with social media is misinformation as there is no check or means to verify the content. The users are free to say anything they want anonymously. There is not a form of social media out there yet that allows for it to be effective.
- Other stakeholders felt that if we do not use social media then we are missing out on a big audience. Social media is by no means a replacement of other types of media, but communications experts are increasingly seeing its value as complementary to traditional public and media outreach efforts. It also allows for more interactive, two-way dialogue, which has the potential to improve understanding as well as conveying a sense of transparency.
- Need to understand and think carefully about how to respond to misinformation. For example: Information that was cited in a letter to a state legislature came from a solo non-scientific researcher who does not have technical training. Part of the reason it was picked up was because of the words he used.

Public Hearings

- Public hearings can be helpful in getting people together but should never be a starting point. Preparation work and open dialogues with communities before the meeting is where the rubber meets the road.
- Public meetings can be really effective in some situations. One good example is Otway project in Australia. The project implementers were preparing for the Otway CCS demonstration project in a rural, farm-oriented community. First impressions of the project were negative. However, regular community meetings were held on a bi-monthly basis and the community was turned into an asset for the project. Important to note that it may not be appropriate for every situation.

Transparent process definition

Transparent Process: A process that entails timely, open and candid engagement with communities during the different stages of the project life cycle.