Update on Public Communications and Outreach – Canada

Since the last CSLF meeting in Berlin, Canada has continued with existing initiatives and has undertaken some new activities related to public communication and outreach.

New Initiatives

- **Canadian Feature Day on CO_2 Capture and Storage at COP11 – Dec. 2, 2005**

Canada organized and hosted a parallel event at the recent Climate Change Conference in Montreal on Canadian efforts around carbon dioxide capture and storage as an important greenhouse gas mitigation option for Canada. The purpose of Canada's Feature Day was to demonstrate Canada's leadership on the development of CCS technology to the public and to an international audience and to highlight the collaborative approach that we have undertaken, both domestically and internationally, to achieve this goal. Keynote addresses were given by the Honourable John McCallum, Minister of Natural Resources Canada and the Honourable Guy Boutilier, Minister of Alberta Environment while speakers included Canadian experts who spoke on a broad range of issues such as regulatory development, capacity building, how CCS is currently used in existing projects, public and ENGO attitudes towards the use of CCS, etc. The event was covered in the media. Information on the presentations and media coverage can be found at:

http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/es/etb/cetc/combustion/co2network/htmldocs/cop_e.html

- **Stakeholders Perspectives on Carbon Capture and Storage - What are the Risks?**

The Energy Innovation Network (EnergyINet) is led by champions from both the public and private sectors across Canada. EnergyINet's role is to encourage the development and application of new technologies for responsible energy production and environmental performance. For more information on EnergyINet, please refer to the following website http://www.energyinet.com.

EnergyINet hosted a two-day workshop to educate local and national NGOs on CO_2 capture and storage technology and to determine what they felt were the risks associated with the technology. The first day consisted of a primer on CO_2 capture and storage while the second day focused on the risk assessment of specific components and how the risks could be managed. Breakout groups were then formed to determine on what issues stakeholders felt there should be further work. A workshop report will be made available shortly.

- **Canada's CO_2 Capture and Storage Technology Roadmap**

Canada's CO_2 Capture and Storage Technology Roadmap, which will be released in March 2006, has identified the following activities to be undertaken to educate the public on CCS. These proposed activities along with ongoing policy deliberations and increasing knowledge of CCS issues will shape Canada's future activities in the area of public communication and outreach.

- Identify recognizable independent experts in the scientific, engineering and NGO communities and encourage their participation on task forces or advisory panels to whom the media will turn for information

- Inform education leaders and educational institutions of the importance of science in maintaining an informed public, and how to use science to make important decisions

- Develop a public outreach program to act as a forum for discussion on energy and energy system options available to Canada (both fossil fuel, and alternative, systems and infrastructure)

- Provide more public education about climate change and its implications for Canada

- Increase public outreach on the capture and geological storage of CO_2, focusing on:
    - How geological storage works
    - CCS' climate change benefits
    - The low probability of negative effects
    - Available preventative/remediation measures
    - The role that geological storage can play in EOR
    - The use of CCS historically and around the world

- Reach out to the media proactively to increase the public's awareness and prevent misinformation

- Actively involve the federal and provincial governments in managing CCS

- **IEA GHG Weyburn-Midale CO_2 Monitoring and Storage Project – Final Phase**

The final phase of the IEA GHG Weyburn-Midale CO_2 Monitoring and Storage Project was launched in 2005. The Project will broaden its focus beyond the technical challenges to encourage CO_2 geological storage and will provide information and recommendations to address policy issues such as regulatory requirements, public communications and outreach and business requirements. The Public Communications theme plan is being

developed and is expected to provide useful information to both policy makers and the general public.

Existing Initiatives

- **Public Attitudes Towards Geological Disposal of Carbon Dioxide in Canada**

(Ms. Jacqueline Sharp and Dr. Mark Jaccard, Simon Fraser University & Dr. David Keith, University of Calgary)

This project was completed as part of a Master's thesis at Simon Fraser University. The study assessed the acceptability of carbon dioxide capture and storage technology to Canadians through focus groups and an internet based survey. Overall, 1,207 Canadians participated in the study. The key research questions being addressed in this study are:

1. Identify the public's state of knowledge about geological disposal of CO_2 and identify and prioritize any concerns that they have.
2. Identify and prioritize the reasons for public support of geological disposal of CO_2.
3. Separate and identify the opposition stemming from concern about the *risks* of geological disposal of CO_2 from *fundamental* opposition to geological disposal of CO_2 as the wrong solution to the climate change problem
4. Identify and understand some of the features that might determine the degree of public support for geological disposal of CO_2 as a greenhouse gas mitigation measure in Canada.
5. Determine how the presentation of positive (benefit-focused) information versus negative (risk-focused) information about geological disposal of CO_2 impacts support for the technology.
6. Determine how attitudes toward geological disposal of CO_2 differ between residents of Alberta and Saskatchewan, where most of the disposal will take place, and residents living in other areas of Canada.

The results showed that Canadians believe that climate change is occurring and some action should be taken to address it, but the issue ranks low in importance compared with other national issues. Public knowledge of GDC was low, but after an introduction to the technology, including the benefits and risks, respondents were slightly supportive of GDC development in Canada. The most important benefits of GDC were seen to be its usefulness as a bridging technology while long-term climate change solutions are developed, the potential for its use as part of carbon dioxide (CO_2)-based EOR, and its potential to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions faster and cheaper than alternatives, while the public was most concerned about unknown future impacts, contamination of groundwater, the risk of a CO_2 leak, and harm to plants and animals.

Overall, respondents perceived the technology as having a net positive impact on the environment, and believed that GDC was less risky than normal oil and gas industry operations, nuclear power, or coal-burning power plants, all of which are extensively used in Canada. Over half of respondents would likely use GDC in a climate change strategy, while only a quarter of respondents would likely not include it. However, GDC was less popular than energy efficiency and renewable energy alternatives, and it will have to be used in combination with these technologies in order to retain public support.

- **Updates of CO2 Capture and Storage Technology Network websites**

http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/es/etb/cetc/combustion/co2trm/htmldocs/news_e.html