

Carbon Sequestration leadership forum

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POLICY GROUP

Task Force on Communications Strategy and Activities

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TASK FORCE ON COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY AND ACTIVITIES

Note by the Secretariat

Background

At the meeting of the Policy Group in Cape Town, South Africa, in April 2008, a new Task Force was created for the purpose of implementing a communications strategy to raise the profile of the CSLF so that it can be more effective in carrying out its work. This Task Force currently consists of Australia, the European Commission, Mexico, Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States. This paper is a report of the Task Force's planned strategy and activities toward achieving its goals.

Action Requested

The Policy Group is requested to review and consider the status report of the Task Force on Communications.

Communications Task Force Strategy and Activities

Summary

As is evident in media coverage, high-level meetings such as the G8 Summit, and in public opinion, carbon capture and storage (CCS) is increasingly mentioned as a potential mitigation option for effectively reducing CO₂ emissions while contributing to the security of national energy supplies. Although this is a positive trend, the worldwide level of understanding about CCS, its technologies and potential is low to non-existent, emphasizing the importance of engaging opportunities for disseminating affirmative and useful information.

A recent study indicates that exposure to information from experts increases stakeholder understanding and support for CCS technology. Even more importantly, the results also suggest that those who understand CCS tend to support its advancement. Ultimately, stakeholder communities can be potentially powerful advocates who can assist in communicating the benefits of CCS to strategic venues and media.

Through its significant role and mission in the international effort to minimize global CO₂ emissions and reduce the threat of potential climate change, the CSLF clearly should be in the forefront of efforts to educate stakeholders and constituent audiences about CCS technology.

The organization's responsibility in this regard is articulated in the 2009 update of the CSLF Strategic Plan which, among its technical, political, and regulatory goals, includes the need to "address the barriers to public awareness and acceptance" and "engage stakeholders in the development and execution" of the plan's objectives.

In addressing these challenges, the Strategic Plan directs the CSLF to focus its communications and outreach efforts on the "global aspects of CCS as an important mitigation technology," since project acceptability will be highly dependent on local conditions that could differ greatly from location-to-location. A key to the CSLF successfully achieving this objective is an integrated and collaborative communications and outreach effort that effectively engages key stakeholders and audiences in a variety of ways with timely, interesting, and educational information.

In conveying the central message about CCS technology as a vital mitigation option, an effective and comprehensive outreach strategy and effort will also: Raise CSLF visibility and establish the organization as a credible source on CCS technologies and policies; Help extend public confidence in the viability of fossil fuel resources for meeting both increased future energy needs and concerns about CO₂'s contribution to potential climate change; Promote efforts by the CSLF and its members to realize CCS's promise and potential.

An important point to note is the fact that the CSLF lacks a communications and outreach budget that would allow for a much more extensive and effective program. Therefore the communications plan recommends activities aimed at marshalling the collective in-kind capabilities and existing communications vehicles of CSLF members and the Secretariat in a proactive manner in an attempt to bring about realization of the stated objectives.

Objectives of the Communications and Outreach Plan

The primary goals of the activities suggested are to:

- Raise CSLF visibility and communicate important CSLF-related information;
- Engage key stakeholders and audiences with timely information in an integrated effort;
- Achieve outreach objectives as identified in the CSLF Strategic Plan.

Key Components

To accomplish these goals, the communications plan suggests the organization and members use a variety of communications tools:

- Web Site – Redevelop existing CSLF web site, build on strengths, continually improving functionality and content;
- Identifying and Deploying “Messengers” – Identify a “spokesperson” from each CSLF member nation.
- Creating Communications Vehicles – Develop communications tools and materials to be used by the CSLF membership to help deliver consistent information and reinforce the CSLF identity.
- Maximizing Venue Use – Identifying on a country, regional, and international basis the most effective venues, meetings, and conferences for promoting CCS and the CSLF.
- Encouraging Media Coverage – Undertaking a proactive effort to engage trade and major media, locally, regionally, and internationally.
- Identify Strategic Partner Relationships – Create a list by members of potential “allies,” both nationally and regionally, who can be engaged to leverage CSLF communications efforts.
- Making Adjustments – Conducting regular reviews of CSLF outreach efforts; make adjustments when necessary.

Suggested Timeline

- Web Site – Ongoing
- Members Identify CSLF Spokespersons – Ongoing
- Communications Vehicles/Talking Points – 3rd Quarter, 2009
- Communications Materials/Standard Speech – 3rd Quarter, 2009
- Communications Materials/Power Point Presentation – 3rd Quarter, 2009
- Identify Conference/Speaking Venues – ASAP
- Media Initiatives/Develop Media Contact List – ASAP
- Media Initiatives/Monitor CCS News Coverage – Ongoing
- Media Initiatives/Disseminating CSLF NewsAlerts – As Needed
- Media Initiatives/Directing Media to Web Sites – ASAP
- Media Initiatives/Creating Op-Eds – As Needed
- Media Initiatives/Media Briefings – As Needed
- Identify Strategic Partners – ASAP
- Conduct Regular Reviews of Communications and Outreach Effort – Ongoing