



IEAGHG Information Paper; 2013-IP26; CCS in the London Convention – Update from the 2013 meeting

Summary

Transboundary CCS makes further progress in that countries have agreed new Guidance on the responsibilities around export of CO₂, so all safeguards are now in place. But export of CO₂ is still not permitted until sufficient countries have ratified the export amendment, and the IMO Secretary-General expresses “serious concern” at the rate of ratification.

Context

The annual meeting of the London Convention and London Protocol was held at the International Maritime Organisation in London from 14th -18th October (LC35 and LP8).

The main issue for CCS at the London Convention is the topic of transboundary export of CO₂ for geological storage. At the 2012 annual meeting, the London Protocol adopted ‘Revised Specific Guidelines for the Assessment of CO₂ for Disposal into Sub-seabed Geological Formations’. These Guidelines have to be used by countries when issuing a permit for CO₂ geological storage, and the revised version includes for the use of geological storage which crosses national boundaries. However there are two significant remaining transboundary aspects to be resolved.

The CCS amendment adopted in 2009 to allow export of CO₂ for geological storage requires 2/3 of Parties to ratify before it comes into force. This currently means 29 countries need to ratify it. To date just two have (Norway and UK).

Developments in 2013

Emphasis and concern on the rate of this ratification was expressed by Mr. Koji Sekimizu, the IMO Secretary-General in his opening speech to the meeting.

“The London Protocol currently is also the only global framework to regulate carbon capture and sequestration in sub-seabed geological formations..... However, it remains a serious concern that, to date, only two of the 43 London Protocol Parties have accepted the 2009 amendment, which is a long way from satisfying the entry-into-force requirements. The importance of securing its entry into force cannot be over-emphasized, if the threat of acidification of the oceans from climate change is to be minimized.”

It is understood that just four countries are working on their ratification, so this looks like it will take a very long time, and in the meantime London Protocol countries cannot export their CO₂ to another country for storage in the marine environment.

The other transboundary aspect to be resolved is the development of guidance to determine the responsibilities of Parties in the case of export of CO₂, in particular if exported to a country that is not a party to the London Protocol. A working group on this has been led by Canada, and reached a conclusion at this meeting with a new document **“Guidance on the Implementation of Article 6.2 on the Export of CO₂ Streams for Disposal in Sub-seabed Geological Formations for the purpose of Sequestration”**.



This sets out the responsibilities of Parties and the requirements of the agreements and arrangements which must be entered into by Parties who wish to undertake export of CO₂, including if to non-Parties, so as to ensure that the standard of requirements of the London Protocol on permitting CO₂ geological storage are maintained. If these requirements are significantly breached then the Party is required to terminate the export. This new Guidance was adopted on 18th October, for use when the export amendment comes into force.

IEAGHG and IEA attend and contribute to the meetings, providing updates to plenary on their activities relevant to CCS in the marine environment and as participants in the CCS working group. Particular interest was shown in the IEAGHG's Monitoring Network and Environmental Research Networks, including in the advances in offshore monitoring and understanding of environmental impacts.

The secretariat and hosting for the London Convention and the London Protocol is provided by the International Maritime Organisation in London, an agency of the UN. Further information on the London Convention and its Protocol can be found on the public website <http://www.imo.org/OurWork/Environment/SpecialProgrammesAndInitiatives/Pages/London-Convention-and-Protocol.aspx>.

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18th October 2013