

Maren Strandevold in NS Energy: Industry View: The Path Ahead for Carbon Capture and Storage in the UK

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As the UK steps up its net-zero preparations, carbon capture and storage technology forms a key part of its plans for a low-emission industrial sector.

Carbon capture and storage technology is a key pillar of the UK industrial decarbonisation strategy, featuring prominently in a recently-published roadmap to achieving net-zero emissions by mid-century. Maren Strandevold, associate at international law firm Haynes Boone, takes a closer look at the issues involved and discusses what the UK can learn from efforts in Norway to deploy the technology at scale.

The UK government has made waves with its Energy White Paper, which set out its goals for a “green industrial revolution”. The goal is for Britain to reach net zero by 2050 in accordance with the Paris Agreement.

Achieving that goal involves reducing carbon emissions, however, it is not going to be possible to reach net zero simply by cutting emissions while industries and processes remain dependent on fossil fuel. It is therefore necessary to look at other ways in which carbon can be removed from the atmosphere.

Carbon capture and storage (CCS) forms an important part of the UK government’s plan, but how viable is it?

The technology is not new. Statoil (now Equinor) first established a large-scale CCS project at its Sleipner gas field in 1996, and there are currently 26 operational CCS projects around the world. In the UK, the government set up an initiative in 2015 to launch new CCS projects, with energy companies Drax and Shell competing for the opportunity to build a commercial CCS project.

This scheme, however, was scrapped as it became clear that the costs were too great and the project was not commercially viable.

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