Tipsheet: Reporting on the oil industry's use of carbon capture and storage (CCS) to extend its social licence.

Compiled by Matthew Green, global investigations editor at DeSmog, a nonprofit climate news service, for the Global Investigative Journalism Network conference in September 2023. <matthew@desmog.com>

Some Recent Essential Background Reading:

DeSmog has produced a useful backgrounder examining some of the key issues around CCS:

> Carbon Capture and Storage – 'False solution' or vital tool to curb emissions?

The nonprofit Center for International Environmental Law updated its FAQ page on CCS in April 2023:

> Carbon capture and storage: Frequently Asked Questions

DeSmog contributor Michael Buchsbaum wrote this blog assessing the state of play in April 2023:

> Solution or Boondoggle: Evaluating carbon capture technology's sate of global play

A DeSmog-reported story for Reuters Events on the oil industry's push to sell the world on "net-zero oil" from December 2022:

> Can fossil fuel industry sell world on 'net-zero oil?"

Climate and energy analyst Ketan Joshi wrote a powerful critique of CCS in November 2022:

> CCS Causes the Problems it Fails to Solve

Good context in this September 2022 briefing by the nonprofit Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis:

> The carbon capture crux: Lessons learned.

Helpful Organisations

These are some of the leading nonprofits that have published a wealth of reports and data on CCS, or oil and gas survival strategies and influence more broadly (in no particular order):

- Center for International Environmental Law
- Institute for Energy Economics and Analysis
- Oil Change International
- DeSmog
- Global Energy Monitor
- Carbon Brief
- Hydrogen Science Coalition
- InfluenceMap

Government bodies

Many national governments and regulators will have information on CCS. At a global level, the Paris-based International Energy Agency is regarded as an authoritative source of data and reports on CCS.

Industry Sources

One of the most frequently-cited industry voices on CCS is the Global CCS Institute, which publishes annual updates on CCS deployment globally, and maintains a database of projects – though most of the data is reserved for paying members.

Potential Reporting Lines

Here are some potential avenues for digging deeper into CCS:

- **Subpoenaed documents:** DeSmog reporter Dana Drugmand trawled internal oil industry documents subpoenaed as part of a landmark congressional hearing on Big Oil's role in spreading climate disinformation in October 2021. Dana was able to demonstrate that the oil industry planned to use CCS to extend its social licence in her February 2023 story Big Oil's Been Secretly Validating Critics' Concerns about Carbon Capture.
- **Industry conferences:** Finding opportunities to listen to industry executives speaking candidly to friendly audiences can be very revealing. The mask slipped notably in March 2023, when Occidental CEO Vicki Hollub admitted that the company's venture into direct air capture technology aimed to extend the life of oil and gas for "60,70, 80" years.
- **Analysing public funding requests:** Since carbon capture and related projects (such as blue hydrogen) rely so heavily on public subsidies, public records requests or databases can shed new light on the industry's plans. See for example this story by DeSmog reporter Phoebe Cooke's June 2022 story Most EU Hydrogen Projects Risk Prolonging the Use of Fossil Fuels.
- **Impact on communities:** Inflated claims over CCS are increasingly being used to greenwash new fossil fuel infrastructure being built in the face of opposition from environmental justice communities, an angle DeSmog explored in collaboration with Floodlight News with this story for the Guardian on plans to build a liquefied natural gas export terminal in south Texas Carbon capture project is "Band-Aid" to greenwash $10 bln LNG plant, locals say.
- **Other avenues:** Could obviously include submitting Freedom of Information Requests to gain greater understanding of state support for specific projects; trawling research and reports produced by regulators and industry bodies lobbying for expanded use of CCS to boost oil production (a process known as enhanced oil recovery).

Other Interesting Stuff

This April 2022 commentary by Andrew Bergman, Holly Buck, Olúfẹ́mi O. Táíwò, Toly Rinberg for the New Republic arguing that communities should be given control of carbon capture projects, to prevent polluters profiting from the technology.

This October 2019 study by Mark Z. Jacobson at Stanford University raised important questions about the rate of CO2 actually captured by CCS technology, and associated air pollution.

If you have questions for DeSmog, please get in touch! **<matthew@desmog.com>**