

SiteChar

A EU RESEARCH PROJECT DEDICATED TO THE
CHARACTERISATION OF EUROPEAN GEOLOGICAL
CO₂ STORAGE SITES



**Advancing public awareness
on the selection of sites
for the geological storage of CO₂**



[www. sitechar-co2.eu](http://www.sitechar-co2.eu)



INFORMING EFFECTIVE LOCAL PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT in the process of techno-economic site assessments and project development

Whereas no method exists to guarantee local public acceptability of any project, a constructive stakeholder engagement process does increase the likelihood of successful dialogue with members of the local population.

Getting to know the population living in an area in which a storage project is proposed and engaging in public information activities can be very helpful for understanding if and how a storage project could be appropriate in a specific area.

SiteChar has investigated the social dimensions of two prospective storage sites: one onshore in Poland and one offshore Scotland, UK. The social site characterisation and public engagement activities have been ongoing in the years 2011 and 2012.

The aim in SiteChar is to build trust and raise public awareness.



SOCIAL SITE CHARACTERISATION

Definition and Methods

Social site characterisation is the process of making a “social map” of the area:

- Who are the stakeholders or interested parties?
- What factors shape their perceptions of CCS?

Factors investigated include local awareness, knowledge, perceptions, issues affecting local well-being, as well as trusted media, institutions, and public representatives. Methods include desk research, interviews, media analyses, and repeated surveys.

Social site characterisation runs as a parallel activity to technical site characterisation.

SiteChar test a format in which project operators, authorities, and the local public could enhance their cooperation in project planning.

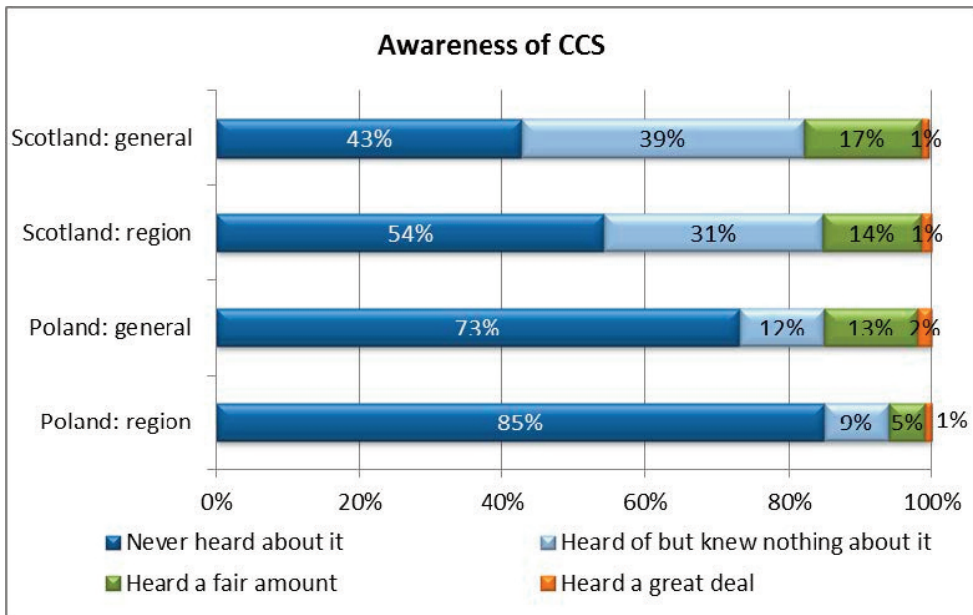
Key components to successful public participation:

- Early involvement;
- Fairness in decision-making.



Social Site Characterisation Surveys

Social site characterisation surveys are performed using representative samples to characterise the local population in terms of awareness and opinions of CCS as well as present perceptions of the area, local needs and trusted stakeholders.



Awareness of CCS is much lower in Poland than Scotland:

In both Poland and Scotland 61% of those who have heard of CCS expect slightly to very positive impacts.

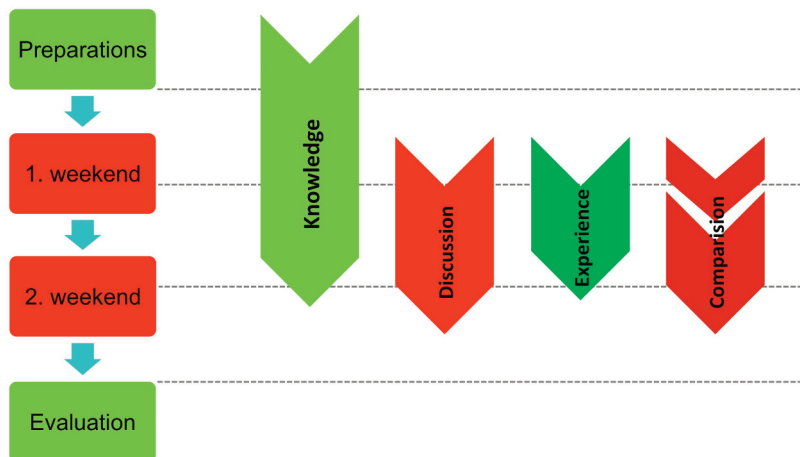
In both Poland and Scotland 23% of the respondents indicate to trust no one to represent their interests in decisions affecting their local area.



Exchanges of views between Site Operators, Competent Authorities, and Local Citizens

The “focus conference” is a participation method involving a small group of local citizens. It combines effective elements from the already existing repertoire of other public participation methods.

The focus conference method structures participation in two weekends combining provision of expert knowledge with lots of room for discussions, allowing each participant to gain own experiences with CCS and creating opportunities for comparing their own opinion with the opinion of others.



The central output of the focus conference is a positioning paper written by the participants themselves.

Participants have presented their positioning papers to the wider community at information meetings.

Highlights of the results in the participants' own words...

Polish and Scottish groups position papers

Poland:

“The majority of the group thinks that there are too many uncertainties to clearly opt for carbon capture and storage technology (CCS)”.



Scotland:



“We believe it important that an exit strategy should be developed (...) to address how to scale down and then ultimately exit the CCS industry completely at a later point in the future”.



Take-Home messages for Site Operators and Competent Authorities...

Scotland:

- Development of CCS is only acceptable as part of a suite of options, on parallel track with power generation from renewable sources.

Poland:

- Still too many uncertainties regarding risks, benefits to the region, costs, and the position of the government to opt for CCS;
- CCS is generally too costly to invest in; investments unjustified, no clear local benefits.

Both:

- Climate change not understood as no valid argument for local deployment unless CCS is adopted worldwide;
- Other measures (renewables) preferred;
- Given the many “unknowns” (risks, effectiveness), clarity needed on national as well as local benefits;
- Expectations from national and EU governments: clear vision on CCS; information campaigns as well as active stimulation of public involvement in decision-making on all possible solutions to climate change.



SiteChar

Techniques for social site characterisation and public participation are proposed and tested within the Sitechar project. These techniques are suitable for raising public awareness about complex issues such as CCS and to initiate local discussion and planning processes with the appropriate type of information, through appropriate media, and involving all relevant stakeholders.

For a long term effect in a real life project setting, it will be vital that these efforts as well as their outcomes are embedded in real projects and are related to national policy agendas and priorities.

WP8 coordinator: brunsting@ecn.nl

SiteChar coordinator: florence.delprat-jannaud@ifpen.fr

