

Social license to operate (SLO) in the Hynet and Humber industrial clusters

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Abstract:

To achieve widespread decarbonisation, CCS and associated technologies need to be perceived as credible solutions to climate change, in order to achieve a social license to operate (SLO). The work being presented shows results from engaging with stakeholders and the UK public in leading UK industrial clusters, Hynet Northwest and the Humber.

Stakeholders from business, industry, NGOs, and policymakers participated in virtual workshops, identifying priorities and challenges in forming an SLO within these clusters. The discussions highlighted the need for trust and confidence between industries, local governments, and the public.

Engagements with the UK public in the cluster regions revealed similarities in awareness of the UK's industrial decarbonisation plans, and a lack of familiarity with net zero. They expressed a clear understanding of the urgency to address climate change, whilst emphasising the need for more data, evidence, and transparency. Tensions were evident regarding timescales, questioning if solutions would be ready in time and how soon benefits would be realised.

The findings revealed similarities and differences in views between the clusters, and provided insights into each cluster's attributes and narratives. This qualitative understanding of the SLO in UK industrial decarbonisation clusters emphasizes the significance of addressing social, political, and ethical concerns within the wider cluster regions. Transferable insights for building a SLO in other clusters will be highlighted, with suggestions for improving legitimacy, credibility and trust for the timely implementation of decarbonisation projects.