

Carbon capture will benefit from better regulation

A pioneering project facilitated by Scotland's Regulatory Review Group (RRG) will help realise the vast potential of Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) energy schemes.

The group, which today publishes its annual report, has looked at how the process of environmental planning applications to use the latest clean energy technology can be better managed and coordinated.

This innovative exercise, developed by the Scottish Government and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, brought together all the key developers, consultants, environmentalists, planners, academics and regulators, to test run and assess the current regulatory framework and identify pressure points.

Following this pioneering and collaborative approach, Scotland is better placed to progress applications to build Carbon Capture and Storage facilities.

The work will now be taken forward by the regulators in a new Project Monitoring Board to monitor progress of CCS demonstration project applications, promote effective engagement with communities and meet the demanding timescales required under the UK and EU CCS funding competitions.

Welcoming the RRG's Annual Report, Enterprise Minister Jim Mather said:

"This has been another extremely effective year for the RRG. The collaborative approach that they are bringing to whole issue of regulation is delivering real benefits for our economy.

“The work done on Carbon Capture and Storage demonstrates that by getting key players together we can test run planning and regulation issues to prevent hold ups and blockages in the system and improve transparency to the public.

“Of course, regulation has to be in place to balance economic, social and environmental interests, but the complexity of CCS projects means that better coordination of regulation is required to ensure projects are understood by the public and delivered within UK and EU funding deadlines.

“By looking collaboratively at some of the issues that may arise from applications to build CCS projects in Scotland, we can ensure we are well prepared to deal with applications of this kind and reap the many benefits of successful projects. It will also ensure that environmental issues and public engagement are considered from the very beginning of any project.

“I would like to put on record my thanks to Russel Griggs and his team and look forward to their work continuing to make Scotland even more competitive. That can only help the delivery of our economic recovery plan and sustain and accelerate our economy’s return to growth.”

Professor Russel Griggs, Chair of the RRG said: “This has been a particularly busy year for the RRG and we have been involved in a wide variety of interesting and valuable projects – from reviewing legislation to investigating industry concerns.

“Our involvement in facilitating innovative regulatory exercises, bringing together regulators and other key stakeholders at an early stage, has helped deliver successful outcomes. We will continue to work to produce a regulatory environment which is fit for purpose and improves Scotland’s competitiveness. The fact that RRG is now being asked to do these exercises and projects by both business and Government shows that the notion of better regulation is becoming

embedded in our thinking and that our partnership approach of us all working towards the same outcome is bearing fruit.”