IPCC Special Report

Carbon Dioxide Capture and Storage

Summary for Policymakers

A Special Report of Working Group III
of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

This summary, approved in detail at the Eighth Session of IPCC Working Group III (Montreal, Canada, 22-24 September 2005), represents the formally agreed statement of the IPCC concerning current understanding of carbon dioxide capture and storage.

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What is CO_2 capture and storage and how could it contribute to mitigating climate change?

1. *Carbon dioxide (CO_2) capture and storage (CCS) is a process consisting of the separation of CO_2 from industrial and energy-related sources, transport to a storage location and long-term isolation from the atmosphere. This report considers CCS as an option in the portfolio of mitigation actions for stabilization of atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations.*

Other mitigation options include energy efficiency improvements, the switch to less carbon-intensive fuels, nuclear power, renewable energy sources, enhancement of biological sinks, and reduction of non-CO_2 greenhouse gas emissions. CCS has the potential to reduce overall mitigation costs and increase flexibility in achieving greenhouse gas emission reductions. The widespread application of CCS would depend on technical maturity, costs, overall potential, diffusion and transfer of the technology to developing countries and their capacity to apply the technology, regulatory aspects, environmental issues and public perception (Sections 1.1.1, 1.3, 1.7, 8.3.3.4).

2. *The Third Assessment Report (TAR) indicates that no single technology option will provide all of the emission reductions needed to achieve stabilization, but a portfolio of mitigation measures will be needed.*

Most scenarios project that the supply of primary energy will continue to be dominated by fossil fuels until at least the middle of the century. As discussed in the TAR, most models also indicate that known technological options[1] could achieve a broad range of atmospheric stabilization levels but that implementation would require socio-economic and institutional changes. In this context, the availability of CCS in the portfolio of options could facilitate achieving stabilization goals (Sections 1.1, 1.3).

What are the characteristics of CCS?

3. *Capture of CO_2 can be applied to large point sources. The CO_2 would then be compressed and transported for storage in geological formations, in the ocean, in mineral carbonates[2], or for use in industrial processes.*

Large point sources of CO_2 include large fossil fuel or biomass energy facilities, major CO_2-emitting industries, natural gas production, synthetic fuel plants and fossil fuel-based hydrogen production plants (see Table SPM.1). Potential technical storage methods are: geological storage (in geological formations, such as oil and gas fields, unminable coal beds and deep saline formations[3]), ocean storage (direct release into the ocean water column or onto the deep seafloor) and industrial fixation of CO_2 into inorganic carbonates. This report also discusses industrial uses of CO_2, but this is not expected to contribute much to the reduction of CO_2

Table SPM.1. Profile by process or industrial activity of worldwide large stationary CO_2 sources with emissions of more than 0.1 million tonnes of CO_2 ($MtCO_2$) per year.

Process	Number of sources	Emissions ($MtCO_2$ yr^{-1})
Fossil fuels		
Power	4,942	10,539
Cement production	1,175	932
Refineries	638	798
Iron and steel industry	269	646
Petrochemical industry	470	379
Oil and gas processing	Not available	50
Other sources	90	33
Biomass		
Bioethanol and bioenergy	303	91
Total	**7,887**	**13,466**

[1] "Known technological options" refer to technologies that exist in operation or in the pilot plant stage at the present time, as referenced in the mitigation scenarios discussed in the TAR. It does not include any new technologies that.will require profound technological breakthroughs. Known technological options are explained in the TAR and several mitigation scenarios include CCS

[2] Storage of CO_2 as mineral carbonates does not cover deep geological carbonation or ocean storage with enhanced carbonate neutralization as discussed in Chapter 6 (Section 7.2).

[3] Saline formations are sedimentary rocks saturated with formation waters containing high concentrations of dissolved salts. They are widespread and contain enormous quantities of water that are unsuitable for agriculture or human consumption. Because the use of geothermal energy is likely to increase, potential geothermal areas may not be suitable for CO_2 storage (see Section 5.3.3).
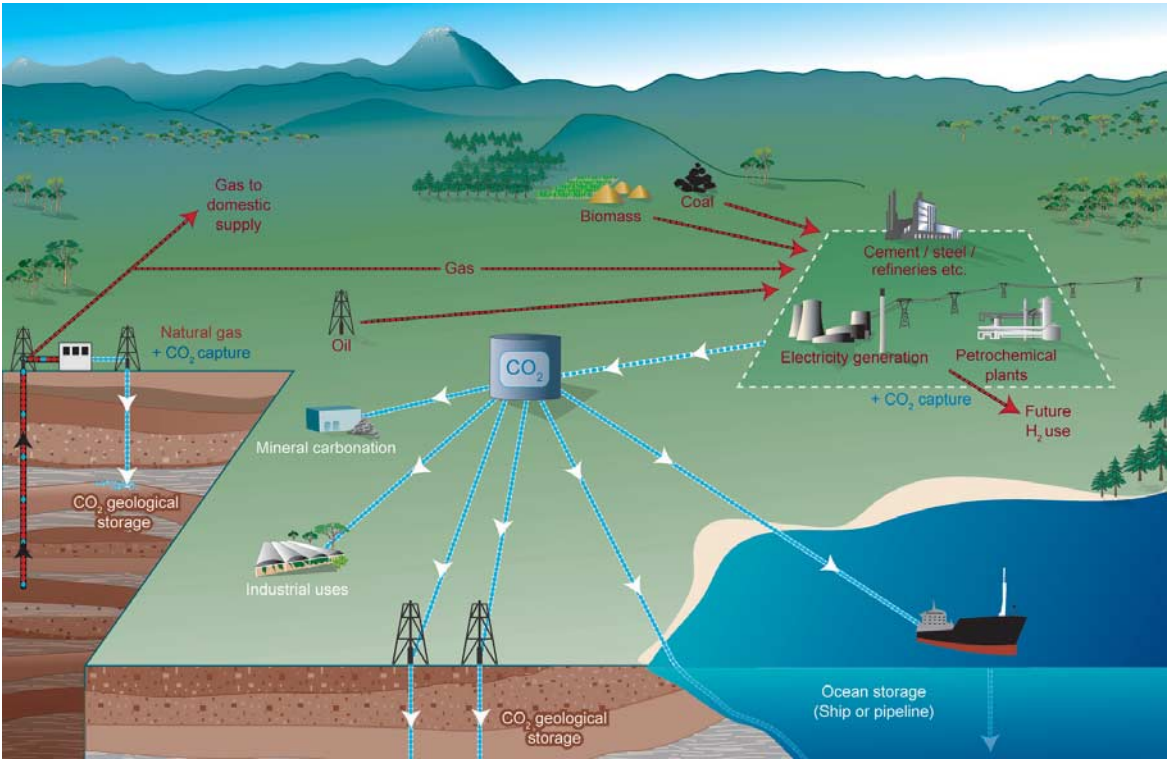
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Figure SPM.1. Schematic diagram of possible CCS systems showing the sources for which CCS might be relevant, transport of CO_2 and storage options (Courtesy of CO2CRC).

emissions (see Figure SPM.1) (Sections 1.2, 1.4, 2.2, Table 2.3).

4. *The net reduction of emissions to the atmosphere through CCS depends on the fraction of CO_2 captured, the increased CO_2 production resulting from loss in overall efficiency of power plants or industrial processes due to the additional energy required for capture, transport and storage, any leakage from transport and the fraction of CO_2 retained in storage over the long term.*

Available technology captures about 85–95% of the CO_2 processed in a capture plant. A power plant equipped with a CCS system (with access to geological or ocean storage) would need roughly 10–40%[4] more energy than a plant of equivalent output without CCS, of which most is for capture and compression. For secure storage, the net result is that a power plant with CCS could reduce CO_2 emissions to the atmosphere by approximately 80–90% compared to a plant without CCS (see Figure SPM.2). To the extent that leakage might occur from a storage reservoir, the fraction retained is defined as the fraction of the cumulative amount of injected CO_2 that is retained over a specified period of time. CCS systems with storage as mineral carbonates would need 60–
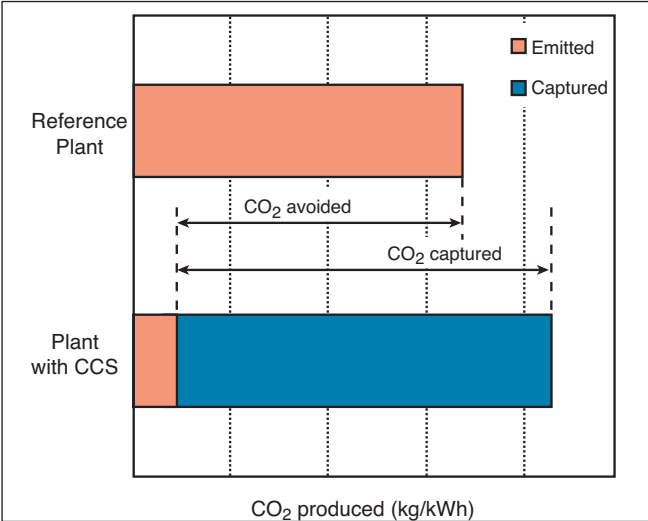

Figure SPM.2. CO_2 capture and storage from power plants. The increased CO_2 production resulting from the loss in overall efficiency of power plants due to the additional energy required for capture, transport and storage and any leakage from transport result in a larger amount of "CO_2 produced per unit of product" (lower bar) relative to the reference plant (upper bar) without capture (Figure 8.2).

[4] The range reflects three types of power plants: for Natural Gas Combined Cycle plants, the range is 11–22%, for Pulverized Coal plants, 24–40% and for Integrated Gasification Combined Cycle plants, 14–25%.

180% more energy than a plant of equivalent output without CCS. (Sections 1.5.1, 1.6.3, 3.6.1.3, 7.2.7).

What is the current status of CCS technology?

5. *There are different types of CO_2 capture systems: post-combustion, pre-combustion and oxyfuel combustion (Figure SPM.3). The concentration of CO_2 in the gas stream, the pressure of the gas stream and the fuel type (solid or gas) are important factors in selecting the capture system.*

Post-combustion capture of CO_2 in power plants is economically feasible under specific conditions[5]. It is used to capture CO_2 from part of the flue gases from a number of existing power plants. Separation of CO_2 in the natural gas processing industry, which uses similar technology, operates in a mature market[6]. The technology required for pre-combustion capture is widely applied in fertilizer manufacturing and in hydrogen production. Although the initial fuel conversion steps of pre-combustion are more elaborate and costly, the higher concentrations of CO_2 in the gas stream and the higher pressure make the separation easier. Oxyfuel combustion is in the demonstration phase[7] and uses high purity oxygen. This results in high CO_2 concentrations in the gas stream and, hence, in easier separation of CO_2 and in increased energy requirements in the separation of oxygen from air (Sections 3.3, 3.4, 3.5).

6. *Pipelines are preferred for transporting large amounts of CO_2 for distances up to around 1,000 km. For amounts smaller than a few million tonnes of CO_2 per year or for larger distances overseas, the use of ships, where applicable, could be economically more attractive.*

Pipeline transport of CO_2 operates as a mature market technology (in the USA, over 2,500 km of pipelines transport more than 40 $MtCO_2$ per year). In most gas pipelines, compressors at the upstream end drive the flow, but some pipelines need intermediate compressor stations. Dry CO_2 is not corrosive to pipelines, even if the CO_2 contains contaminants. Where the CO_2 contains moisture, it is removed from the CO_2 stream to prevent corrosion and to avoid the costs of constructing pipelines of corrosion-
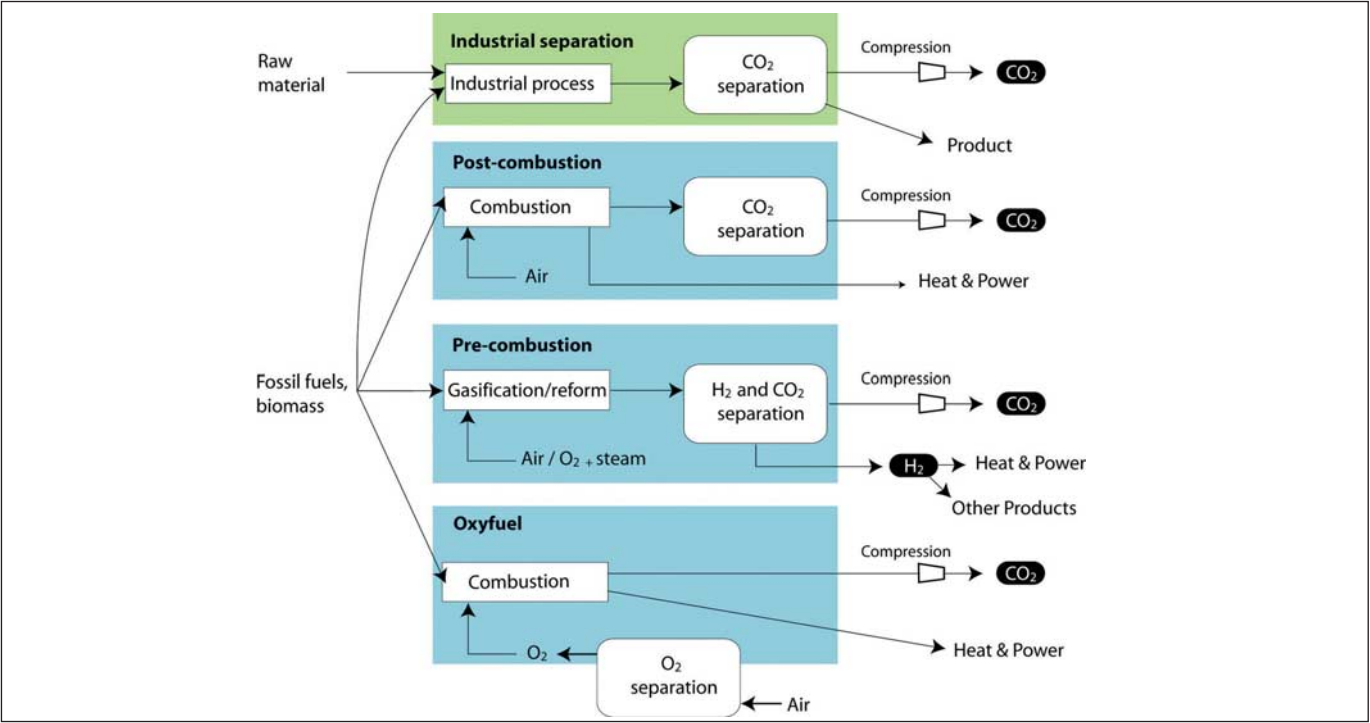

Figure SPM.3. Schematic representation of capture systems. Fuels and products are indicated for oxyfuel combustion, pre-combustion (including hydrogen and fertilizer production), post-combustion and industrial sources of CO_2 (including natural gas processing facilities and steel and cement production) (based on Figure 3.1) (Courtesy CO2CRC).

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[5] "Economically feasible under specific conditions" means that the technology is well understood and used in selected commercial applications, such as in a favourable tax regime or a niche market, processing at least 0.1 $MtCO_2$ yr^{-1} , with few (less than 5) replications of the technology.

[6] "Mature market" means that the technology is now in operation with multiple replications of the commercial-scale technology worldwide.

[7] "Demonstration phase" means that the technology has been built and operated at the scale of a pilot plant but that further development is required before the technology is ready for the design and construction of a full-scale system.
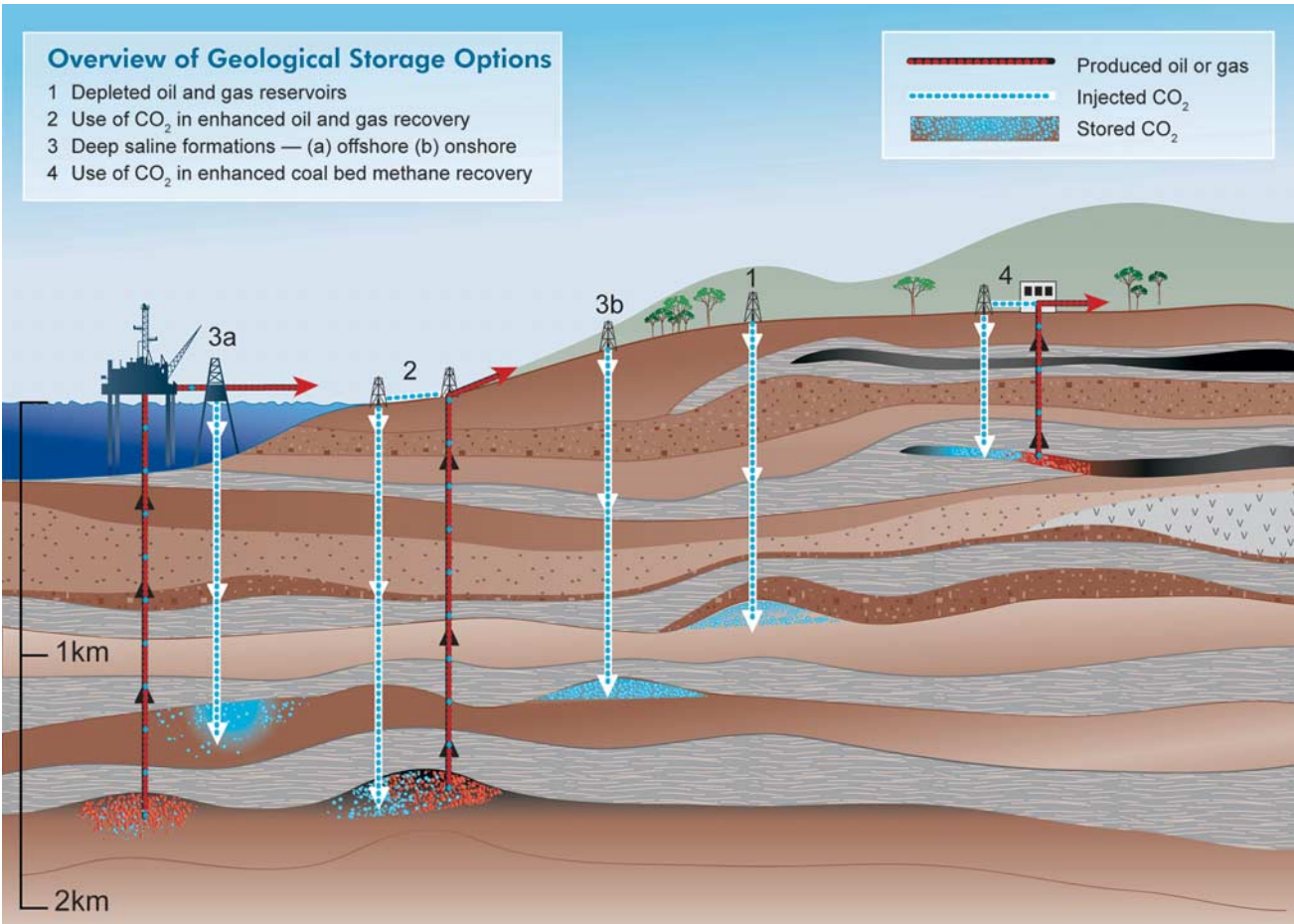
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Figure SPM.4. Overview of geological storage options (based on Figure 5.3) (Courtesy CO2CRC).

resistant material. Shipping of CO_2, analogous to shipping of liquefied petroleum gases, is economically feasible under specific conditions but is currently carried out on a small scale due to limited demand. CO_2 can also be carried by rail and road tankers, but it is unlikely that these could be attractive options for large-scale CO_2 transportation (Sections 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.3.2, Figure 4.5, 4.6).

7. *Storage of CO_2 in deep, onshore or offshore geological formations uses many of the same technologies that have been developed by the oil and gas industry and has been proven to be economically feasible under specific conditions for oil and gas fields and saline formations, but not yet for storage in unminable coal beds[8] (see Figure SPM.4).*

If CO_2 is injected into suitable saline formations or oil or gas fields, at depths below 800 m[9], various physical and geochemical trapping mechanisms would prevent it from migrating to the surface. In general, an essential physical trapping mechanism is the presence of a caprock[10]. Coal bed storage may take place at shallower depths and relies on the adsorption of CO_2 on the coal, but the technical feasibility largely depends on the permeability of the coal bed. The combination of CO_2 storage with Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR[11]) or, potentially, Enhanced Coal Bed Methane recovery (ECBM) could lead to additional revenues from the oil or gas recovery. Well-drilling technology, injection technology, computer simulation of storage reservoir performance and monitoring methods from existing applications are being

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[8] A coal bed that is unlikely to ever be mined – because it is too deep or too thin – may be potentially used for CO_2 storage. If subsequently mined, the stored CO_2 would be released. Enhanced Coal Bed Methane (ECBM) recovery could potentially increase methane production from coals while simultaneously storing CO_2. The produced methane would be used and not released to the atmosphere (Section 5.3.4).

[9] At depths below 800–1,000 m, CO_2 becomes supercritical and has a liquid-like density (about 500–800 kg m^{-3}) that provides the potential for efficient utilization of underground storage space and improves storage security (Section 5.1.1).

[10] Rock of very low permeability that acts as an upper seal to prevent fluid flow out of a reservoir.

[11] For the purposes of this report, EOR means CO_2-driven Enhanced Oil Recovery.
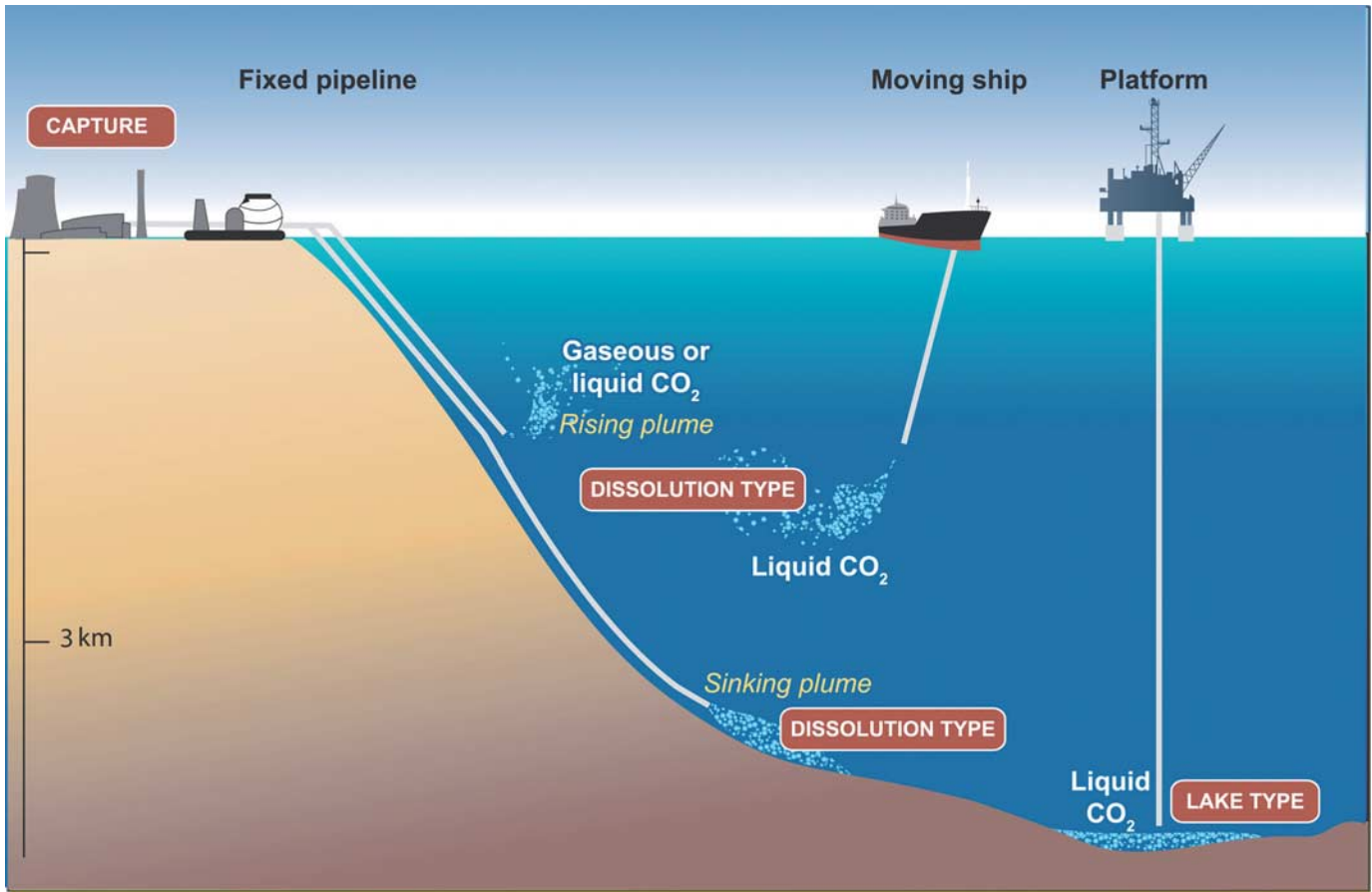
Figure SPM.5. Overview of ocean storage concepts. In "dissolution type" ocean storage, the CO_2 rapidly dissolves in the ocean water, whereas in "lake type" ocean storage, the CO_2 is initially a liquid on the sea floor (Courtesy CO2CRC).

developed further for utilization in the design and operation of geological storage projects.

Three industrial-scale[12] storage projects are in operation: the Sleipner project in an offshore saline formation in Norway, the Weyburn EOR project in Canada, and the In Salah project in a gas field in Algeria. Others are planned (Sections 5.1.1, 5.2.2, 5.3, 5.6, 5.9.4, Boxes 5.1, 5.2, 5.3).

8. *Ocean storage potentially could be done in two ways: by injecting and dissolving CO_2 into the water column (typically below 1,000 meters) via a fixed pipeline or a moving ship, or by depositing it via a fixed pipeline or an offshore platform onto the sea floor at depths below 3,000 m, where CO_2 is denser than water and is expected to form a "lake" that would delay dissolution of CO_2 into the surrounding environment (see Figure SPM.5). Ocean storage and its ecological impacts are still in the research phase[13].*

The dissolved and dispersed CO_2 would become part of the global carbon cycle and eventually equilibrate with the CO_2 in the atmosphere. In laboratory experiments, small-scale ocean experiments and model simulations, the technologies and associated physical and chemical phenomena, which include, notably, increases in acidity (lower pH) and their effect on marine ecosystems, have been studied for a range of ocean storage options (Sections 6.1.2, 6.2.1, 6.5, 6.7).

9. *The reaction of CO_2 with metal oxides, which are abundant in silicate minerals and available in small quantities in waste streams, produces stable carbonates. The technology is currently in the research stage, but certain applications in using waste streams are in the demonstration phase.*

The natural reaction is very slow and has to be enhanced by pre-treatment of the minerals, which at present is very energy intensive (Sections 7.2.1, 7.2.3, 7.2.4, Box 7.1).

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[12] "Industrial-scale" here means on the order of 1 $MtCO_2$ per year.

[13] "Research phase" means that while the basic science is understood, the technology is currently in the stage of conceptual design or testing at the laboratory or bench scale and has not been demonstrated in a pilot plant.

10. *Industrial uses[14] of captured CO_2 as a gas or liquid or as a feedstock in chemical processes that produce valuable carbon-containing products are possible, but are not expected to contribute to significant abatement of CO_2 emissions.*

The potential for industrial uses of CO_2 is small, while the CO_2 is generally retained for short periods (usually months or years). Processes using captured CO_2 as feedstock instead of fossil hydrocarbons do not always achieve net lifecycle emission reductions (Sections 7.3.1, 7.3.4).

11. *Components of CCS are in various stages of development (see Table SPM.2). Complete CCS systems can be assembled from existing technologies that are mature or economically feasible under specific conditions, although the state of development of the overall system may be less than some of its separate components.*

There is relatively little experience in combining CO_2 capture, transport and storage into a fully integrated CCS system. The utilization of CCS for large-scale power plants (the potential application of major interest) still remains to be implemented (Sections 1.4.4, 3.8, 5.1).

What is the geographical relationship between the sources and storage opportunities for CO_2?

12. *Large point sources of CO_2 are concentrated in proximity to major industrial and urban areas. Many such sources are within 300 km of areas that potentially hold formations suitable for geological storage (see Figure SPM.6). Preliminary research suggests that, globally, a small proportion of large point sources is close to potential ocean storage locations.*

Table SPM.2. Current maturity of CCS system components. The X's indicate the highest level of maturity for each component. For most components, less mature technologies also exist.

CCS component	CCS technology	Research phase [13]	Demonstration phase [7]	Economically feasible under specific conditions [5]	Mature market [6]
Capture	Post-combustion			X	
	Pre-combustion			X	
	Oxyfuel combustion		X		
	Industrial separation (natural gas processing, ammonia production)				X
Transportation	Pipeline				X
	Shipping			X	
Geological storage	Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR)				X[a]
	Gas or oil fields			X	
	Saline formations			X	
	Enhanced Coal Bed Methane recovery (ECBM)		X		
Ocean storage	Direct injection (dissolution type)	X			
	Direct injection (lake type)	X			
Mineral carbonation	Natural silicate minerals	X			
	Waste materials		X		
Industrial uses of CO_2					X

[a] CO_2 injection for EOR is a mature market technology, but when this technology is used for CO_2 storage, it is only 'economically feasible under specific conditions'

[14] Industrial uses of CO_2 refer to those uses that do not include EOR, which is discussed in paragraph 7.

Figure SPM.6a. Global distribution of large stationary sources of CO_2 (Figure 2.3) (based on a compilation of publicly available information on global emission sources; IEA GHG 2002)
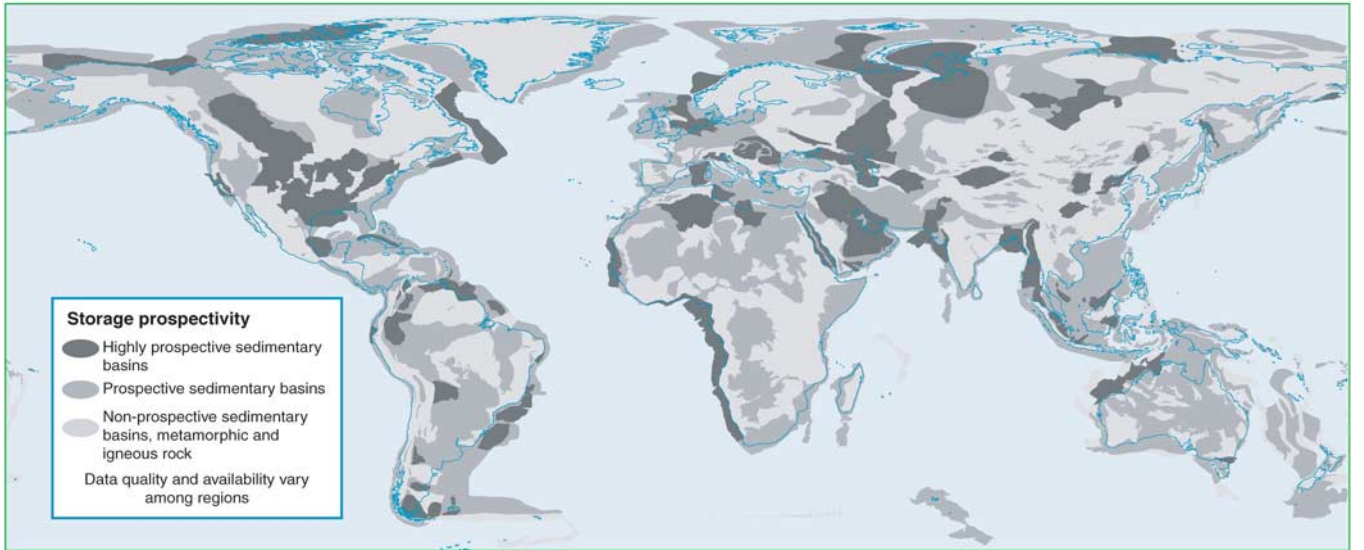

Figure SPM.6b. Prospective areas in sedimentary basins where suitable saline formations, oil or gas fields or coal beds may be found. Locations for storage in coal beds are only partly included. Prospectivity is a qualitative assessment of the likelihood that a suitable storage location is present in a given area based on the available information. This figure should be taken as a guide only because it is based on partial data, the quality of which may vary from region to region and which may change over time and with new information (Figure 2.4) (Courtesy of Geoscience Australia).

Currently available literature regarding the matches between large CO_2 point sources with suitable geological storage formations is limited. Detailed regional assessments may be necessary to improve information (see Figure SPM.6b).

Scenario studies indicate that the number of large point sources is projected to increase in the future, and that, by 2050, given expected technical limitations, around 20–40% of global fossil fuel CO_2 emissions could be technically suitable for capture, including 30–60% of the CO_2 emissions from

electricity generation and 30–40% of those from industry. Emissions from large-scale biomass conversion facilities could also be technically suitable for capture. The proximity of future large point sources to potential storage sites has not been studied (Sections 2.3, 2.4.3).

13. *CCS enables the control of the CO_2 emissions from fossil fuel-based production of electricity or hydrogen, which in the longer term could reduce part of the dispersed CO_2*

emissions from transport and distributed energy supply systems.

Electricity could be used in vehicles, and hydrogen could be used in fuel cells, including in the transport sector. Gas and coal conversion with integrated CO_2 separation (without storage) is currently the dominant option for the production of hydrogen. More fossil fuel or biomass-based hydrogen or electricity production would result in an increased number of large CO_2 sources that are technically suitable for capture and storage. At present, it is difficult to project the likely number, location and size of such sources (Sections 2.5.1).

What are the costs[15] for CCS and what is the technical and economic potential?

14. *Application of CCS to electricity production, under 2002 conditions, is estimated to increase electricity generation costs by about 0.01–0.05 US dollars[16] per kilowatt hour (US$/kWh), depending on the fuel, the specific technology, the location and the national circumstances. Inclusion of the benefits of EOR would reduce additional electricity production costs due to CCS by around 0.01–0.02 US$/kWh[17] (see Table SPM.3 for absolute electricity production costs and Table SPM.4 for costs in US$/t$CO_2$ avoided). Increases in market prices of fuels used for power generation would generally tend to increase the cost of CCS. The quantitative impact of oil price on CCS is uncertain. However, revenue from EOR would generally be higher with higher oil prices. While applying CCS to biomass-based power production at the current small scale would add substantially to the electricity costs, co-firing of biomass in a larger coal-fired power plant with CCS would be more cost-effective.*

Costs vary considerably in both absolute and relative terms from country to country. Since neither Natural Gas Combined Cycle, Pulverized Coal nor Integrated Gasification Combined Cycle systems have yet been built at a full scale with CCS, the costs of these systems cannot be stated with a high degree of confidence at this time. In the future, the costs of CCS could be reduced by research and technological development and economies of scale. Economies of scale could also considerably bring down the cost of biomass-based CCS systems over time. The application of CCS to biomass-fuelled or co-fired conversion facilities would lead to lower or negative[18] CO_2 emissions, which could reduce the costs for this option, depending on the market value of CO_2 emission reductions (Sections 2.5.3, 3.7.1, 3.7.13, 8.2.4).

15. *Retrofitting existing plants with CO_2 capture is expected to lead to higher costs and significantly reduced overall efficiencies than for newly built power plants with capture. The cost disadvantages of retrofitting may be reduced in the case of some relatively new and highly efficient existing plants or where a plant is substantially upgraded or rebuilt.*

The costs of retrofitting CCS to existing installations vary. Industrial sources of CO_2 can more easily be retrofitted with CO_2 separation, while integrated power plant systems would need more profound adjustment. In order to reduce future retrofit costs, new plant designs could take future CCS application into account (Sections 3.1.4, 3.7.5).

16. *In most CCS systems, the cost of capture (including compression) is the largest cost component.*

Costs for the various components of a CCS system vary widely, depending on the reference plant and the wide range

Table SPM.3. Costs of CCS: production costs of electricity for different types of generation, without capture and for the CCS system as a whole. The cost of a full CCS system for electricity generation from a newly built, large-scale fossil fuel-based power plant depends on a number of factors, including the characteristics of both the power plant and the capture system, the specifics of the storage site, the amount of CO_2 and the required transport distance. The numbers assume experience with a large-scale plant. Gas prices are assumed to be 2.8-4.4 US$ per gigajoule (GJ), and coal prices 1-1.5 US$ GJ^{-1} (based on Tables 8.3 and 8.4).

Power plant system	Natural Gas Combined Cycle (US$/kWh)	Pulverized Coal (US$/kWh)	Integrated Gasification Combined Cycle (US$/kWh)
Without capture (reference plant)	0.03 - 0.05	0.04 - 0.05	0.04 - 0.06
With capture and geological storage	0.04 - 0.08	0.06 - 0.10	0.05 - 0.09
With capture and EOR[17]	0.04 - 0.07	0.05 - 0.08	0.04 - 0.07

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[15] As used in this report, "costs" refer only to market prices but do not include external costs such as environmental damages and broader societal costs that may be associated with the use of CCS. To date, little has been done to assess and quantify such external costs.

[16] All costs in this report are expressed in 2002 US$.

[17] Based on oil prices of 15–20 US$ per barrel, as used in the available literature.

[18] If, for example, the biomass is harvested at an unsustainable rate (that is, faster than the annual re-growth), the net CO_2 emissions of the activity might not be negative.