



## PORTS – A VITAL FOUNDATION FOR THE UK’S CARBON AND CAPTURE REVOLUTION



The UK Government has set some grand ambitions for the growth of carbon capture and storage (“CCS”) for the UK – more than 50 million tonnes per year by 2035. However, this capturing and storing of carbon underground is not a substitute for reducing our emissions. It is instead a complement to the reduction efforts; Recognising that in some situations (for example in industries such as steel making and refining) the lead time for large scale emissions eradication is uncertain and certainly longer than the UK’s overall reduction goals.

The scale of ambition – from almost a standing start today to tens of millions of tonnes in little more than a decade – is both a huge challenge but also a huge opportunity for the UK and the organisations that can play a role in the development of the CCS supply chain.

And that, given the coastal and offshore nature of much of the CCS infrastructure, is where ports come in. Their role is similar in some ways to the proven success model for supporting offshore wind, but different in other important aspects. But where the two definitely come together is in the role for ports, not just as vital foundations for the UK’s net zero infrastructure but also as catalysts for the new generation of sustainable investment and jobs that comes with it.

It’s an opportunity and role that we recently explored in a round table of major port operators, alongside our friends in the Carbon Capture and Storage Association.

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Although the most common conception of CCS is of mega pipelines transporting CO2 from a power station, steelworks, or refinery directly to depleted gas fields, there is another essential part of the CCS landscape – the ‘Non-Pipeline Transport’ segment or NPT. Here, emissions generated in locations which don’t have the critical mass for their own pipeline or the necessary local geology, can be captured and shipped around the coast to locations where the CO2 can be stored. As well as providing the option for non-pipeline linked locations, the NPT also provides important flexibility and supply resilience for the locations with storage, both of which in turn are important for economic viability.

Ports are of course the essential nodes in this NPT sector for loading and unloading, as well as supporting buffer storage and processing infrastructure. Plus, there could also be opportunities for ports to repeat their role as cornerstones for local supply chain clusters, attracting investment and spurring job creation in multiples of the roles in the port transport alone.

This local supply chain development, with its clusters and job creation could and should be an important part of the ‘levelling up’ story for our coastal communities, who can be too often amongst the most deprived in the UK.

Our roundtable with port operators was eye-opening in terms of the scale of the requirement and the pace that will be required. However, there was huge interest and enthusiasm from the port operators in playing their role. There are some big unknowns to be worked though, both for the physical and economic models. But it’s clear that in CCS, like other fields like offshore wind, ports have a vital role to play in this aspect of our more sustainable future and the ‘green industrial revolution.’

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The logo for UKMPG (UK Major Ports Group) is displayed in a bold, blue, serif font. The letters 'UK' are positioned to the left of 'MPG', and the entire logo is underlined with a blue horizontal line.