Nottingham scientist fights climate change

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A University of Nottingham scientist has won a Royal Society award for his innovative work to combat climate change.

Dr George Chen received the prestigious award at a ceremony in London to recognise scientists who are helping to put the UK at the forefront of the battle against global warming.

His pioneering work, which is developing ways of taking carbon dioxide (CO_2) out of the atmosphere, could play a key role in future efforts to reduce global climate change. His research could also reduce the need to store highly pressurised CO_2 underground.

Carbon abatement technologies, including carbon capture, storage and long-term utilisation of CO_2, will play a vital role in revolutionising energy use worldwide. The University of Nottingham has a broad range of internationally-recognised research programmes in this field, and launched the Energy Technologies Research Institute in November 2006 to bring together top academics and industrial partners.

The award made to Dr Chen was part of the Royal Society's 'Labs to Riches' event, which encourages innovation in science and technology and promotes its commercial application.

Dr Chen, of The University of Nottingham's School of Chemical, Environmental and Mining Engineering, said: "It is a great honour for me to receive this prestigious award from the Royal Society.

"I see this award as an authoritative recognition of our research in CO_2 mitigation. It has certainly stimulated my whole research group at Nottingham and we are really looking forward to demonstrating the feasibility of this approach."

The awards were made at a gala dinner at the Royal Society's headquarters in London on February 15, presented by Sir David Wallace, Vice President and Treasurer of the Royal Society.

Dr Chen won the Brian Mercer Award for Feasibility, which is given to allow researchers to investigate the technical and economic feasibility of commercialising an aspect of their scientific research. The awards were established by a generous bequest from the late Brian Mercer OBE FRS.

The accumulation in the Earth's atmosphere of 'greenhouse gases' such as CO_2 is widely blamed for global warming. Greenhouse gases, generated by the burning of fossil fuels and other human activities, are so-called because they trap more of the Sun's heat — leading to the temperature increases associated with climate change.

Martin Rees, President of the Royal Society, said: "Tackling global warming is not only a moral imperative but it is also an economic one.

"Britain has some of the best scientists in the world and we need to make the most of them. All of the award winners have the potential to change how we live and to make a serious contribution to the UK's economy."

Source: University of Nottingham