Durham scientists to tackle CO2 storage in global warming challenge

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Scientists at Durham University (UK) are working on new ways of storing CO_2 emissions underground to help in the fight against global warming.

The University has launched the Carbon Storage Research Group, which will be led by the newly-created position of Professor of Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) and Energy.

Researchers aim to find efficient and reliable ways of gathering CO_2 from fossil-fuel fired power plants and storing it in former oil and gas fields or aquifers indefinitely so it cannot add to global warming.

The new professorship is a three-way partnership between Durham University's Centre for Research into Earth Energy Systems (CeREES), DONG Energy and Ikon Science. Durham hopes to attract a leading figure in the area of carbon capture and storage to take on the role.

CO_2 is a greenhouse gas that traps heat radiation trying to escape the earth's atmosphere which scientists say is behind the rise in global temperatures.

Capturing and storing that CO_2 is seen as an essential part of reducing the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

At the recent G8 summit the world's richest nations stated their "vision" to cut CO_2 emissions by 50 per cent by 2050 and the UK has plans to

build power plants with carbon capture facilities.

Research into carbon capture and storage further strengthens Durham's work in the field of green energy which includes research into wind and wave power, solar energy, biofuels and the social implications of new and renewable energy

Professor Chris Higgins, Vice-Chancellor of Durham University, Brent Cheshire, Managing Director of DONG Energy (UK) Ltd and Martyn Millwood Hargrave, Chief Executive of Ikon Science, will sign an agreement confirming the professorship in a ceremony at Hollingside House, Hollingside Lane, Durham City, on Thursday, July 24.

Professor Richard Davies, Director of CeREES, at Durham University, said: "As demand for energy increases we need innovative and practical solutions where CO_2 can be removed from the atmosphere to counteract global warming.

"Our combined expertise will allow us to investigate ways of capturing carbon and ensuring that it remains underground once stored."

DONG Energy will lend its experience in producing and distributing energy while Ikon Science will develop new technologies for monitoring and modelling the injection of CO_2 into the earth.

Martyn Millwood Hargrave, Chief Executive of UK headquartered Subsurface Technology developer Ikon Science, said: "We look forward to working with the highly respected CeREES team in Durham to accelerate the development and take up of new technologies and methods including integration with our proven RokDoc® subsurface modelling system."

Brent Cheshire, Managing Director of DONG Energy (UK) Ltd, said:

"We are delighted to be working together with Durham University and Ikon in this very important area and to build on the position we have already established in the UK both in renewable energy and West of Shetland hydrocarbon exploration."

Margaret Fay, Chairman of Regional Development Agency One NorthEast, said: "Reducing the amount of CO_2 released into the atmosphere is possibly the single most important issue facing the world today.

"This announcement is further evidence of North East England's excellent reputation for research in the field of green energy. Global companies recognise that the region is fast becoming a hub for new and renewable energy research and development."

Source: Durham University