

EU to help China test carbon capture

By [Global Research](#)

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The European Union said Thursday it will give China up to euro50 million (\$70 million) to build a carbon capture and storage plant that will test a technology aimed at limiting climate change.

The EU's executive commission says the money will help China develop coal-burning power stations that could capture carbon dioxide and bury it underground. That would allow China to use its most plentiful energy source, coal, without releasing more of the greenhouse gas linked to climate change.

During last month's EU-China summit, Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao asked Europe to help provide it with "clean coal" technology so China could curb emissions from coal-fired power stations.

Energy companies in Europe and the U.S. already are working on trial plants to test if the costly technology could work commercially and whether the carbon can be safely stored, and the EU wants to encourage that kind of work in Asia, too.

The world's most populous continent, with the fastest-growing economies in China and India, already accounts for a third of world emissions of gases blamed for warming weather, including carbon dioxide, the Asian Development Bank has said.

The EU is asking other European governments to contribute more public money to the China carbon capture and storage plant project, saying the technology "would be significantly delayed without immediate assistance from developed countries." This could help trigger more private funding, it says.

The European Commission is pledging euro7 million of EU money immediately to check if a plant would be feasible and is prepared to give up to euro50 million "provided there is continued political support from China and satisfactory progress" with the project. It says it also expects funding from China.

Adding carbon capture and storage to a new power plant burning coal could cost an extra euro980 million (\$1.4 billion), it said.

Growing energy demand in China, India, Brazil, South Africa and Mexico "is likely to be met largely from fossil fuels," the EU said, and "the capacity to deal with these very substantial potential emissions must be developed urgently."

Carbon capture and storage could shave some 10 percent off global gas emissions by 2030, the EU says. A panel of United Nations scientists recommend that emissions must be halved

by 2050 to avoid a catastrophic rise in sea levels, harsher storms and droughts and climate disruptions.

Norwegian oil company Statoil already pumps carbon dioxide into an empty natural gas field under the North Sea and a gas reservoir in the Algerian desert. Swedish power firm Vattenfall is building a “clean coal” plant in Germany that stores CO2 in a nearby aquifer.

EU governments agreed in March to devote some euro1 billion (\$1.4 billion) to building 12 demonstration plants in Europe by 2015.

But some environmentalists are critical about investing heavily in a technology that they say keeps the energy sector hooked on polluting coal and gas instead of shifting faster to zero-carbon renewable sources such as wind or solar power.

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