

Press release

Renewable Carbon Initiative (RCI)

www.renewable-carbon-initiative.com

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What does carbon management really mean and involve?

New thinking and terminology is needed to meet climate goals and secure sustainable carbon supply

The focus of climate policy has been, and to a large extent still is, the decarbonisation of the energy sector, where significant progress has been made in the use of alternative energy sources such as solar, wind, hydro, geothermal and green hydrogen as an energy carrier. Decarbonisation is the right term here because all these options do not rely on carbon-based fossil fuels. In contrast, the products of industrial sectors such as chemicals, derived materials, plastics and construction products are predominantly carbon-based and cannot be decarbonised by their very nature. Even in the energy sector, some applications such as aviation or shipping will not be electrified in the foreseeable future and require carbon-based fuels.

The current policy focus of carbon management is on CO₂ only, the ongoing public consultation in Brussels reduces carbon management to carbon capture and CO₂ management. Limiting carbon management to CO₂ management is not sufficient as it misses the whole aspect of carbon feedstock supply and the circular economy, which is very important for Europe as an industrial location.

In this position paper, the Renewable Carbon Initiative (RCI), supported by CO₂ Value Europe (CVE), proposes a broader definition of carbon management:

Comprehensive carbon management goes beyond CO₂ emissions, capture and long-term storage. It decouples the whole industry from fossil feedstocks, eliminates the use of fossil carbon wherever possible and allocates renewable carbon (from biomass, CO₂ and recycling) as efficiently and effectively as possible where carbon use is unavoidable. The aim is to achieve the lowest possible CO₂ emissions, reduce the need for carbon removal to achieve net zero, and provide a secure supply of renewable carbon to all dependent industries such as chemicals and materials. Truly sustainable carbon cycles can only be achieved when carbon is recognised as a feedstock in carbon management strategies. Proper comprehensive carbon management will defossilise the carbon-dependent materials and energy sectors and decarbonise the remaining energy sector. Carbon Capture and Storage should only be used for the remaining share of truly unavoidable emissions.

The “RCI Position paper on Comprehensive Carbon Management” can be found here: <https://renewable-carbon.eu/publications/product/rci-position-paper-on-comprehensive-carbon-management-pdf/>

Disclaimer

RCI members are a diverse group of companies addressing the challenges of the transition to renewable carbon with different approaches. The opinions expressed in these publications may not reflect the exact individual policies and views of all RCI members.

The Renewable Carbon Initiative (RCI) is a global network of more than 60 prominent companies dedicated to supporting and accelerating the transition from fossil carbon to renewable carbon (bio-based, CO₂-based and recycled) for all organic chemicals and materials. Its work focuses on scientific background reports, position papers, advocacy and networking.

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