

Terms of Reference for the Global Methane Initiative

The undersigned national government entities (collectively referred to as “the Partners”) set forth the following Terms of Reference for the Global Methane Initiative (referred to as “the Initiative”). The Initiative serves as a framework with the goal of achieving global reductions of anthropogenic methane emissions through partnerships among developed countries, developing countries, and countries with economies in transition, in coordination with the private sector, researchers, development banks, and other relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations.

1. Purpose

To create a voluntary, non-binding framework for international cooperation to reduce methane emissions and to advance the recovery and use of methane as a valuable energy source to increase energy security, enhance economic growth, improve air quality, and improve industrial safety. The Initiative focuses on the abatement, recovery, and use of methane through technology demonstration, dissemination, and implementation of effective policy frameworks, identification of ways and means to support investment, and removal of barriers to collaborative project development. The Initiative serves to complement and support Partners’ efforts implemented under the United Nations’ Framework Convention on Climate Change.

2. Functions

The Partners will seek to:

- 2.1 Identify and promote areas of bilateral, multilateral, and private sector collaboration on methane abatement, recovery, and use in the areas of agriculture, coal mining, municipal solid waste (MSW), oil and gas systems, and municipal wastewater treatment, and in other areas as agreed to by the Partners.
- 2.2 Develop policy guidance and encourage implementation of near-term policies that support the identification and deployment of best management practices for the abatement, recovery, and use of methane.
- 2.3 Identify cost-effective opportunities to recover methane emissions for energy production and potential financing mechanisms to encourage investment.
- 2.4 Identify and address barriers to project development and improve the legal, regulatory, financial, institutional, technological, and other conditions necessary to attract investment in methane abatement, recovery, and utilization projects.
- 2.5 Identify and implement collaborative projects aimed at addressing specific challenges to methane abatement and recovery, such as raising awareness in key industries, removing barriers to project development and implementation, identifying project opportunities, and demonstrating and deploying technologies. Partners will also work together to share lessons learned from these cooperative activities.
- 2.6 Foster cooperation with the private sector, research organizations, development banks, and other relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations.

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- 2.7 Integrate and coordinate Initiative activities with related activities and initiatives such as the Climate and Clean Air Coalition, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the Arctic Council, the International Energy Agency, the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Bank, and others that may emerge in the future.
- 2.8 Work to improve scientific understanding in relation to the emissions estimates, abatement, recovery, and use of methane.
- 2.9 Develop and implement action plans that outline a series of concrete activities and actions that directly support the core goals and functions of the Initiative. Action plans can be useful tools in advancing project implementation, facilitating investment, and creating appropriate policy frameworks that support methane abatement, recovery, and use. Promote and assist where feasible the inclusion of methane strategies in country-level planning.
- 2.10 Communicate their progress and accomplishments in implementing action plans or strategies that may include methane mitigation directly or indirectly and undertaking other activities to support the Initiative's goal.
- 2.11 Periodically assess the effectiveness of the Initiative's efforts in achieving its goal.

3. Organization

- 3.1 The Initiative will be composed of a Steering Committee, Subcommittees, and a Project Network. The Initiative will be supported by a Secretariat (formerly known as the Administrative Support Group (ASG)).
- 3.2 Strategic Partners of the Initiative are external organizations with whom coordination and collaboration are mutually beneficial. The Steering Committee may choose organizations to be designated as Strategic Partners based on consensus. Current Strategic Partners are listed on <https://www.globalmethane.org/collaboration/>.

Steering Committee

- 3.3 The Steering Committee will govern the overall framework, policies, and procedures of the Initiative; annually review progress of the initiative; and provide guidance to the Secretariat and Subcommittees. The Steering Committee should meet at least once per year, at times and locations to be determined by its appointed representatives. The Steering Committee will make decisions by consensus.
- 3.4 The Steering Committee's leadership will be comprised of a Chair and up to two (2) Vice Chairs, each for a 2-year term that can be extended by the Steering Committee by consensus. After a 2-year term as Chair, unless the term has been renewed by the Steering Committee, the Chair's term will end. The position of Chair will then be assumed by a Vice Chair, or another Partner, by consensus of the Steering Committee. In the event that the Steering Committee is unable to select a new Chair, one of the Vice Chairs may be asked to act as interim Chair until such time as they can be confirmed by the Steering Committee or until such time as the Steering Committee selects a new Chair.

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- 3.5 Partners in leadership roles are expected to actively participate in the planning activities of the Secretariat and Steering Committee meetings, host a meeting or event (virtually or in-person), and provide strategic direction for the Initiative. Partners should have a minimum of 2 years' experience on the Steering Committee before taking on a leadership role. Leadership should also ideally include Partners from a developed country and from a developing country or a country with an economy in transition.
- 3.6 The Steering Committee membership is comprised of up to 22 GMI Partners. Each Partner on the Steering Committee (Steering Committee Members) may appoint up to two representatives to the Steering Committee. The list of Steering Committee Members, as listed at <https://www.globalmethane.org/steering/index.aspx>, may be amended by consensus of the Steering Committee. Subcommittee Co-Chairs may serve as *ex-officio* members of the Steering Committee.
- 3.7 Current members of the Steering Committee are required to affirm their interest in serving on the Steering Committee for a 2-year term, which may be extended for additional terms if members reaffirm their continued interest in serving on the Committee. The list of Steering Committee members will be based on an "opt-in" process and will be periodically updated by the Secretariat as needed.
- 3.8 With the consensus of the Steering Committee, individuals may participate in meetings of the Steering Committee under the designation of "official observers." An "official observer" will be welcome to offer ideas and perspectives but may not participate in decision-making activities of the Steering Committee. Official observers may include, but are not limited to, representatives of Strategic Partner organizations. Project Network members may be invited to attend certain Steering Committee meetings as observers on an ad hoc basis.

Subcommittees

- 3.9 The Subcommittees of the Initiative will focus on the following focal areas: Biogas (to include Agriculture, MSW, and Municipal Wastewater sectors), Coal Mining, and Oil and Gas Systems. The Steering Committee may establish additional Subcommittees, working groups, or enlarge the scope of existing Subcommittees in other focal areas as agreed.
- 3.10 The Subcommittees will be responsible for guidance and assessment of area-specific activities and engaging representatives of the private sector, development banks, researchers, and other relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations. Each Subcommittee will work to implement its program of action, offer assistance to Partners in the development and implementation of their action plans, provide guidance on project identification, identify and address key barriers and issues for project development, address market assessment and reform issues, facilitate investment and financing opportunities, and report on progress. Subcommittees will report to the Steering Committee. Subcommittees will meet as often as necessary but at a minimum should meet at least once per year, at times and locations to be determined by its appointed representatives to fulfill their responsibilities, making use of electronic media (including email, teleconference, and videoconference) as appropriate in order to minimize travel. Each Subcommittee will make decisions by consensus.

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- 3.11 The Subcommittees will be comprised of representatives from interested Partners, non-governmental organizations, and Project Network members. Each Partner may appoint up to three members to each Subcommittee. Project Network members or interested organizations, such as Strategic Partners, may serve as official delegates or participate informally in a Subcommittee by consent of that Subcommittee.
- 3.12 Each Subcommittee will select two Partners as co-chairs, ideally one from a developed country and the other from a developing country or a country with an economy in transition. At their discretion, Subcommittees may select one additional co-chair. Every three years, Subcommittees should review their leadership to provide other Partners the opportunity to act as co-chair.

Project Network

- 3.13 The Project Network will serve as an informal mechanism that facilitates communication, project development and implementation, and private sector involvement across the Initiative. The Project Network serves as the Initiative's mechanism to reach out to and organize the participation of the private sector, governmental and non-governmental organizations. The Project Network is comprised of representatives from local governments, the private sector, the research community, development banks, and other governmental and non-governmental organizations. Those interested in becoming partners in the Project Network will sign and submit a Project Network Membership Agreement.

The Secretariat

- 3.14 The Secretariat will serve as the principal coordinator of the Initiative's communications and activities. The focus of the Secretariat will be administrative; the Secretariat will not act on matters of substance except as specifically instructed by the Steering Committee. Specifically, the Secretariat will:
 - 3.14.1 Organize the meetings of the Initiative,
 - 3.14.2 Arrange special activities such as teleconferences and workshops,
 - 3.14.3 Receive and forward new membership requests to the Steering Committee,
 - 3.14.4 Coordinate communications of Partnership activities, progress, and accomplishments,
 - 3.14.5 Act as a hub for information for the Initiative,
 - 3.14.6 Provide support for activities related to the Project Network, and
 - 3.14.7 Perform such other tasks as the Steering Committee directs.
- 3.15 The Secretariat will be supported and hosted by the United States, at the Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, D.C. Another organization's or Partner's offer to support and host the Secretariat may be accepted by the consensus of the Steering Committee.
- 3.16 Each Partner will designate an Administrative Liaison to serve as its principal point of contact to the Secretariat. The Secretariat will work with the Liaisons to ensure an adequate flow of information between the Initiative and individual Partners.
- 3.17 The Secretariat may, if appropriate, involve personnel employed by the Partners to assist in specific activities undertaken by the Secretariat. Such personnel will be remunerated

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by their respective employers and will remain subject to their employers' conditions of employment.

4. Membership

- 4.1 These Terms of Reference establish a framework for voluntary cooperation and do not create any legally binding obligations between or among the Partners. Each Partner is expected to conduct the activities contemplated by these Terms of Reference in accordance with the laws under which it operates and the international instruments to which it is a party.
- 4.2 The Steering Committee may invite other national governmental entities to join the Initiative through endorsement of the Terms of Reference.

5. Funding

- 5.1 Participation in the Initiative is on a voluntary basis. Each Partner may, at its discretion, contribute funds, personnel, and other resources to the Initiative subject to the laws, regulations, and policies of the Partner. Any costs arising from the activities contemplated in these Terms of Reference are to be borne by the Partner that incurs them unless other arrangements have been made.
- 5.2 These Terms of Reference do not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable by law or equity against the Partners, their officers or employees, or any other person. No Partner should submit a claim for compensation to another Partner for activities it carries out under these Terms of Reference. These Terms of Reference do not direct or apply to any person outside of the governments of the Partners.

6. Commencement, Modification, Termination, Extension, and Withdrawal

- 6.1 Commencement, Modification and Termination
 - 6.1.1 These Terms of Reference are in effect as of the date they are formally adopted by the Steering Committee and will continue in effect until 31 May 2031 unless extended or terminated by the Steering Committee.¹
 - 6.1.2 These Terms of Reference may be modified at any time by consensus of the Steering Committee.
- 6.2 Extension and Withdrawal
 - 6.2.1 By consensus, the Steering Committee may extend these Terms of Reference for additional periods.
 - 6.2.2 A Partner may withdraw from the Initiative by giving written notice to the other Partners and the Secretariat 90 days prior to its anticipated withdrawal.

¹ The original terms of reference, which commenced on 16 November 2004, were modified and extended by the Steering Committee for an additional five years on 1 October 2010; and were extended until March 2016, when the GMI was again re-chartered for five years.