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## **Update on Municipal Wastewater Sector**

### **Discussion Paper**

#### **1. Purpose**

This paper provides an update regarding the municipal wastewater sector under the Global Methane Initiative (GMI), presents a summary of outcomes from the Wastewater Task Force meeting in Venice in November 2010, and presents potential next steps for the Steering Committee's consideration.

#### **2. Background**

Recognizing the interrelationships of the topic of wastewater within both the landfill and agricultural subcommittees, the Steering Committee initially established a Wastewater Task Force under the Methane to Markets Partnership (M2M) in 2009 in order to explore the interest among Partner countries and to determine how wastewater could best be incorporated within the partnership. In 2010, the Steering Committee formally added wastewater as a focus area within the Terms of Reference; however, did not decide on a structure or process to incorporate wastewater within GMI. The Wastewater Task Force was charged to develop a set of options on the focus area's structure and to prepare recommendations for the Steering Committee's review.

#### **3. The Wastewater Task Force**

The Wastewater Task Force was formed to assess the interest of Partner countries as well as to define the potential scope of the wastewater sector, to investigate the technical and economic opportunities for emission reductions, to explore partnership options with NGOs and other possible Project Network members, and to engage with regional and multilateral development banks where projects have been designed and implemented. The Wastewater Task Force is comprised of interested Partner countries that include representation from Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, India, Mexico, Pakistan, and the United States.

The task force held its first meeting in November 2010 in Venice, Italy, in conjunction with the Landfill and Agriculture Subcommittee meetings. The meeting included presentations from wastewater experts from Brazil and the Netherlands that focused on the current state of wastewater biogas capture and utilization projects in Latin America and Europe. These presentations helped to frame discussions about the most effective way to focus GMI's efforts in this area, overcome obstacles to implementing projects, encourage greater participation, and leverage existing financial sources or Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) funding. During the Venice meeting, the task force decided to focus only on municipal wastewater as a potential GMI sector. The Wastewater Task Force also discussed possible technical and financial support opportunities such as preparing studies, raising awareness, conducting demonstration and pilot projects, and developing a best practices manual.

Currently, GMI is exploring existing initiatives within this sector focused on GHG emission reduction efforts. One of these efforts is supported by the Canadian Government's International Development

Research Centre (IDRC) that is funding a 3-year effort focused on quantification and mitigation of methane emitted from the wastewater sector across Latin America. GMI will be participating in several upcoming activities related to this effort.

#### **4. Possible Future Direction**

Moving forward, the Wastewater Task Force created recommendations to the Steering Committee in regards to how a wastewater sector could fit within the existing GMI structure. The recommendations ask the Steering Committee to consider the following:

##### ***Structure of Wastewater Sector***

1. Creation of a separate Wastewater subcommittee
  - a. Advantages: Allows for targeted discussions and actions to municipal wastewater initiatives.
  - b. Disadvantages: Additional incremental burden to both Partners and the Steering Committee to accommodate an additional sector.
2. Combine Wastewater Task Force within the Landfill subcommittee for a trial period
  - a. Advantages: Allows for more time to accurately identify the direction and resources needed for the Wastewater sector.
  - b. Disadvantages: Scope may not be entirely relevant to all delegate technical expertise and Project Network members. Previous and future actions may get lost or deferred.

##### ***Leadership of Wastewater Sector***

1. Creation of Co-Chairs of Wastewater subcommittee or Wastewater Task Force
  - a. In either structure, leadership must be established in order to carry out the functions of either the Wastewater subcommittee or Task Force.
2. Establishment of Partner country engagement process
  - a. Similar to other subcommittees, a process to welcome interested Partner countries into either the Wastewater subcommittee or Task Force could be formalized.

In summation, the Wastewater Task Force has begun the work of identifying synergies within GMI and identifying both opportunities and obstacles that exist in the abatement, recovery, and use of methane within the framework of municipal wastewater. However, in order to move forward and expand its current reach, the Wastewater Task Force needs guidance on its organizational structure in order to proceed with investigating, cultivating, and expanding its role within GMI. It is also critical that Partner countries are willing and able to commit the necessary time and resources needed to have a productive and informative Wastewater sector. In addition, there is a need among the Partners to develop leadership opportunities for the sector itself as well as more broadly on the technical and policy aspects of municipal wastewater in Partner countries.

#### **5. Next Steps and Items for Steering Committee Consideration**

- Structure of Wastewater Sector: What structure does the Steering Committee wish to pursue for the Wastewater sector? Does the Steering Committee wish to task the ASG with the development of an options paper on how to best transition the existing Wastewater Task Force into a more sustainable future structure?
- Leadership: Depending on the sector structure as determined by the Steering Committee, are there any countries that wish to Chair the Wastewater subcommittee or wish to lead future efforts under

this sector? Are there any Partner countries that wish to participate in either the subcommittee or task force?

- Charge to Wastewater Sector: Does the Steering Committee wish to task the Wastewater subcommittee or Task Force to produce product deliverables such as a sector action plan for the wastewater sector?