

New Delhi, India
March 2010

M2M7/Doc.4

Steering and Technical Subcommittees Membership Procedures

Discussion Paper

1. Purpose

This paper provides an overview of possible revisions to the organization and administrative procedures governing both the Steering and Subcommittees of the Methane to Markets Partnership. It reviews the current procedure for adding new members to the Steering Committee and presents alternative options for regulating the future growth of the Committee. Finally, it summarizes the current status of the Technical Subcommittee leadership structures and suggests new options for consideration.

2. Background

2.1 *Steering Committee*

Section 3.2 of the Terms of Reference (TOR) defines the scope and purpose of the Steering Committee for the Methane to Markets Partnership, which states “The Steering Committee will govern the overall framework, policies and procedures of the Partnership; annually review progress of the initiative; and provide guidance to the Administrative Support Group and Subcommittees.” Furthermore, the section goes on to specify that “Appendix A lists those Partners that may appoint up to two representatives to the Steering Committee. Appendix A may be amended by consensus of the Steering Committee.”

At the launch of the Partnership, all of the original 14 Charter Partners were considered members of the Steering Committee. With the growth of the Partnership, however, seven additional Partners have since been added and the Steering Committee has had several discussions about how to best manage the size of the group to ensure efficiency while allowing new countries to participate in the governing body.

Beginning with the 2005 Buenos Aires meeting, the Steering Committee discussed this issue and agreed to establish a 1-year moratorium on allowing new members to join the Committee in order to allow time to fully examine and consider longer-term issues of size and function. The ASG was subsequently tasked with identifying options and evaluation criteria for adding new members to the Committee.

At the 2006 Rome meeting, the ASG presented its recommendations for evaluating future applications and members agreed to retain the status quo for considering new members to the Steering Committee.¹

¹ The current process requires Partners to submit a letter to the ASG requesting Steering Committee membership within six months of their admittance to the Partnership. The letter should indicate the strengths the country brings to the Partnership and the Steering Committee that would substantiate its request. Applications for Partners requesting membership on the Steering Committee must be received by the ASG at least 60 days prior to the Steering Committee meeting during which the application will be considered. The ASG circulates this letter to the members of the Steering Committee for review and decisions on adding a new member are made by consensus at the next scheduled meeting of the Steering Committee.

Since the Rome meeting, membership on the Steering Committee has continued to grow. At the 2007 Beijing meeting, the Steering Committee again expressed a desire to re-examine the process by which new members were added to the Committee, and the topic was also raised at the January 2009 Mexico Steering meeting.

2.2 Technical Subcommittees

Section 3.5 of the Terms of Reference (TOR) describes the composition and leadership of the Subcommittees, which states “Each Subcommittee will elect two co-chairs, one from a developed [country] and the other from a developing country or country with an economy in transition.” An additional modification to the leadership structure of the Subcommittees was recommended and adopted by the Steering Committee at its initial 2004 Washington, DC meeting. The Steering Committee recommended creation of the position of “vice-chair” to provide an additional Partner country with strong project development and sector experience the opportunity to contribute its leadership and expertise to the Subcommittee.

Currently, Subcommittee chairs are self-nominating for an unlimited term (i.e., duration of service). Other than the requirement that one chair be from a developed country and the other chair hail from a developing country or country with an economy in transition, there are no other criteria that Subcommittee chairs or delegates must meet (e.g., active involvement in Partnership meetings/sector activities).

3. Status of the Committees

Twenty-one Partner countries are currently represented on the Steering Committee. During the first year of the Partnership, four new countries became members and subsequently became members of the Steering Committee. In the second year, both Germany and Poland joined the Partnership and requested participation on the Steering Committee, which was approved.² During the last two years, 10 countries (Bulgaria, Chile, Dominican Republic, Finland, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, The Philippines, and Thailand) and the European Commission (EC) joined the Partnership but only the EC and Kazakhstan requested membership on the Steering Committee.³ The EC’s petition was approved at the Beijing meeting in 2007.

Currently, all of the Technical Subcommittees are lead by two co-chairs, one from a developed country and one from a developing country. Additionally, both the Coal Mine and Oil & Gas Subcommittees have subsequently added a vice-chair position; China was added to the Coal Mine Subcommittee in 2004, and Canada was added to the Oil & Gas Subcommittee in 2006. Ecuador also served as Vice-Chair of the Landfill Subcommittee during 2006-07. An overview of Subcommittee membership and current and past leadership is provided in Table 1.

² While Germany is a member of the Steering Committee, no delegate has ever been named.

³ Kazakhstan’s request to participate in the Steering Committee was tabled because Kazakhstan was unable to attend the meeting.

Table 1. Subcommittee Members and Leadership

	Current Chairs	Past Chairs	Member Countries
Agriculture	United Kingdom, Co-Chair Argentina, Co-Chair	None	Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Finland, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Mongolia, Nigeria, Philippines, Poland, Thailand, United Kingdom, United States, Vietnam
Coal Mines	India, Co-Chair United States, Co-Chair China, Vice Chair	None	Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, Colombia, European Commission, Georgia, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Mongolia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, Republic of Korea, Russia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States
Landfills	Italy, Co-Chair Argentina, Co-Chair	Ecuador, Vice-Chair (2006–2007)	Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Finland, India, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Mongolia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Republic of Korea, Russia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States
Oil & Gas	Russia, Co-Chair Mexico, Co-Chair Canada, Vice-Chair	None	Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, European Commission, Georgia, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, Republic of Korea, Russia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States

4. Possible Revisions to the Organization of the Committees

4.1 *Steering Committee*

In anticipation of continued growth for the Partnership and based on discussions from previous Steering Committee meetings, the ASG has outlined some areas where possible changes may be beneficial to consider including in the revised TOR, such as:

- Limiting the total size of the Steering Committee
- Criteria for joining the Steering Committee
- Procedures for retiring inactive members from the Steering Committee

4.1.1 Limiting the Size of the Steering Committee

In order to ensure a manageable meeting size, the Steering Committee may want to limit the overall membership of the committee. Currently, 21 members serve on the Steering Committee, and a slightly higher limit (e.g., 25-30) could be set, allowing all current members to remain on the Committee but curb the amount of future growth.

Limiting the physical size of the Committee does not have to mean restricting participation from interested Partner countries. As a result, the Steering Committee may also want to consider clarifying the privileges and input that non-Steering Committee members have. The ASG recommends that the Steering Committee recognize that Partners who are not Steering Committee members can have observer status at the Steering Committee meetings. The ASG also notes that all non-Steering Committee members are currently copied on all correspondence to the Steering Committee, already have full access to meeting minutes, and can submit written statements on issues before the Steering Committee meeting.

4.1.2 Criteria for Joining the Steering Committee

In order to ensure that new Steering Committee members have a significant stake in active participation and a strong desire to guide the direction of the Partnership, criteria could be established to guide the acceptance of new members to the Steering Committee. Some possible criteria could include:

- Membership in a minimum of two subcommittees.
- Completion of national methane action plans in the sectors in which the Partner participates.
- Demonstrated financial or technical support of the Partnership through a variety of mechanisms, such as hosting meetings, programming supported, etc.
- Membership of Methane to Markets for no less than six months.

If the Steering Committee adopts criteria for new members, an administrative process could be implemented as follows:

- As under the current system, a country that wished to join the Partnership would send the ASG a letter of interest. The process for approval to join the Partnership would not be changed.
- No earlier than 6 months after joining the Partnership, if the country wished to be considered for the Steering Committee, they would send another letter to the ASG. This letter would provide information to the Steering Committee describing how the country had met or plans to meet the appropriate criteria.
- The Steering Committee could then consider the Partner's application at its next meeting.

4.1.3 Retirement of Inactive Steering Committee Members

To ensure the Partnership continues to evolve and mature, the Steering Committee needs to be able to make consensus-based decisions at each of its meetings. As a result, it is vitally important to the success of the Partnership that Steering Committee member countries remain active participants in the meetings. It is expected that countries will change the individuals serving on their delegations as needed for their internal purposes, and countries can always send substitutes for these individuals if they are unable to attend Steering Committee meetings. To maintain the vitality and viability of the Steering Committee and ensure that its member countries remain active and have a stake in the direction of the Partnership, a procedure for listing as inactive members of the Steering Committee could be implemented. For example, if a Partner were to miss more than two consecutive Steering Committee meetings, at the third meeting their status would be changed to “inactive.” This type of procedure could be implemented with or without a cap on total Steering Committee size, and if there were a cap, the inactive members would not count against the cap. Upon being designated as inactive, the ASG would send a letter to the ministry that signed the letter requesting Steering Committee membership and the ministry that signed the TOR to encourage them to respond as whether they wish to continue serving on the Committee or to be removed from its roster and focus their efforts on Subcommittees of interest.

4.2 Technical Subcommittees

Currently, there are no provisions in the TOR for limiting the service terms of chairs, nor is there a formal mechanism for rotating the chairs periodically to provide leadership opportunities to additional country delegates. The Steering Committee may wish to create a multi-year cycle for leadership on a Subcommittee. At the end of each term, the positions would be open to any interested partner, including the incumbent. It is suggested that the terms of the co-chair positions be staggered to ensure some continuity within the group. The Subcommittees could report on their leadership updates as part of their regular progress reports to the Steering Committee.

5. Items for Consideration and Decision

Steering Committee: Does the Steering Committee wish to adopt a cap limiting the total size of the Steering Committee? Does the Steering Committee wish to adopt criteria governing admission to the Steering Committee, and if so, what should those criteria be? Does the Steering Committee wish to adopt a process for listing as inactive Steering Partners as suggested by the ASG? Are there other changes to the organization of the Steering Committee that the Partners wish to adopt?

Subcommittee Chairmanship: Does the Steering Committee wish to recommend periodic leadership cycles to encourage rotation of existing Subcommittee chairs and thus provide leadership opportunities to additional country Subcommittee delegates?