

The Global Methane Initiative

An enhanced global focus on methane is critical to an effective international response to the threat of climate change. Methane is a potent and short-lived greenhouse gas whose emissions currently account for over one-third of today's atmospheric warming. Most importantly, commercially-proven technologies and practices have tremendous potential for avoiding methane emissions today while also providing cost-effective clean energy, improving air and water quality, as well as human health.

Since 2004, the Methane to Markets Partnership has served as an important international initiative to focus global attention on the importance of reducing methane emissions, but we can and must do more. The governments of the United States and Mexico led the Partnership in the launch of the Global Methane Initiative (GMI) at the Methane to Markets Ministerial meeting in Mexico City, Mexico on 1 October 2010.

The GMI builds on the existing structure and success of the Methane to Markets Partnership. The key elements include:

- *Expanded scope* - including methane abatement and avoidance from existing and new sectors, such as municipal waste water.
- *Methane action plans* - all Partner countries will develop actions plans in order to coordinate methane reduction efforts at home and abroad. Developed countries would provide coordinated assistance to developing country partners.
- *New resource commitments* - from developed country Partners, and others in a position to do so, as well as the broader international community, so as to accelerate global methane abatement.

A Strong Foundation

The GMI is a natural extension of the efforts made by the 38 national Partners comprising the Methane to Markets Partnership and builds on this strong foundation. To date, the Methane to Markets Partnership has successfully advanced methane reduction project development in the agriculture, coal mining, landfill, and oil & natural gas sectors in Partner countries around the world. Notable accomplishments include:

- Building international cooperation on methane mitigation among Partner countries, including all top 10 methane emitting nations.
- Supporting more than 300 projects that when fully implemented will reduce 60 MMTCO₂E/year.
- Leveraging the resources and expertise of over 1,000 Project Network members.
- Complementing and facilitating national actions under the UNFCCC.

Moving Forward

U.S. EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson and Mexico Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources Juan Rafael Elvira Quesada invited delegations from all Partner countries to Mexico City on 1 October 2010, to launch an expanded effort to accelerate global methane reductions. They asked that developed country Partners, and others in a position to do so, consider making new financial commitments to the success of this important initiative. At the Ministerial, Partners joined in supporting a Ministerial Declaration that focuses international attention on the critical role the new Global Methane Initiative can play in our collective fight against climate change.

The Importance of Methane

- Methane is the second most important GHG and is 25 times more potent than CO₂ over a 100-year period. Methane emissions currently contribute to over one-third of today's anthropogenic warming.
- Methane is a short-lived GHG and thus methane reduction plays a critical role in reducing the near term rate of warming and avoiding climatic tipping points.
- Methane recovery and use delivers clean energy as well as improving local air and water quality. Because methane is the primary component of natural gas, reducing emissions can be very cost-effective using available technologies and practices. U.S. EPA estimates that by 2020, reductions of more than 1,500 MMtCO₂E can be achieved at low cost.
- Methane is an important tropospheric ozone precursor. Studies have shown that reducing global methane emissions by 20% could avoid more than 300,000 ozone-related mortalities globally in 2030. Reducing methane anywhere in the world helps air quality everywhere.

For More Information

For more information on the Global Methane Initiative, please contact:

Henry Ferland
Director, Administrative Support Group
U.S. EPA
ferland.henry@epa.gov, asg@globalmethane.org
+1 202-343-9330