

Objective

The Global Methane Initiative (GMI) is a multilateral partnership, the purpose of which is to create a voluntary, non-binding framework for international cooperation to reduce anthropogenic methane emissions and advance the recovery and use of methane as a valuable clean energy source. Other benefits include increasing energy security, enhancing economic growth, improving air quality, and improving industrial safety. The Initiative is a collaboration 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.

GMI focuses on the development of strategies and markets for the abatement, recovery, and use of methane through technology development, demonstration, deployment, and diffusion; implementation of effective policy frameworks; identification of ways and means to support investment; and removal of barriers to collaborative project development and implementation. GMI targets five major methane sources: agriculture, coal mines, landfills, oil and natural gas systems, and wastewater.



➔ Background

Methane (CH₄) is a hydrocarbon and the primary component of natural gas. Methane is also a potent and abundant greenhouse gas (GHG), which makes it a significant contributor to climate change, especially in the near term. Methane is emitted during the production and transport of coal, natural gas, and oil. Emissions also result from livestock and other agricultural practices and from the decay of organic waste in municipal solid waste landfills and certain wastewater treatment systems.

Methane is the second most abundant GHG after carbon dioxide (CO₂), accounting for 14 percent of global emissions. Though methane is emitted into the atmosphere in smaller quantities than CO₂, its global warming potential (i.e., the ability of the gas to trap heat in the atmosphere) is 25 times greater. As a result, methane emissions currently contribute more than one-third of today's anthropogenic warming.

➔ Actions

On 16 November 2004, 14 Partner countries signed the original Terms of Reference document that outlined the purpose, organization, and functions of the former Methane to Markets Partnership. To date, the Methane to Markets Partnership has successfully advanced methane reduction project development in the agriculture, coal mining, landfill, and oil and natural gas sectors in Partner countries around the world. Notable accomplishments include:

- Building international cooperation for 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 more than 1,000 Project Network members (see text box on page 2).

- Complementing and facilitating national actions under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

On 1 October 2010, 37 Partner countries and the European Commission launched the Global Methane Initiative (GMI) to urge stronger international action to fight climate change while developing clean energy and stronger economies. GMI builds on the success and structure of Methane to Markets, broadens the scope to include additional emission sources and new approaches to methane abatement, advances the development of national action plans, and brings new resources to expand international collaboration.



Private Sector Involvement

GMI includes a Project Network that facilitates communication, project development and implementation, and private sector involvement. This Network assists with reaching out to and organizing the efforts of the private sector, the research community, development banks, and other governmental and non-governmental organizations with interests and expertise in methane recovery and use. Active involvement by Project Network members is essential to building capacity, transferring technology, and promoting private direct investment that will ensure the Initiative's success. Project Network members have helped the program leverage nearly \$480 million in investment from private companies and financial institutions. A current list of Project Network organizations is available on the GMI website.

Going Forward

GMI will broaden and deepen the efforts started under the Methane to Markets Partnership in three main ways:

- Expanded scope – it moves the scope from only methane capture and use to methane abatement and destruction and includes new sectors, such as municipal wastewater.
- Methane action plans – all Partner countries will develop actions plans for coordinating methane reduction efforts at home and abroad. These action plans will help identify barriers to project implementation and opportunities for comprehensive efforts to reduce methane emissions in Partner countries, and will help coordinate assistance efforts among Partners.
- New resource commitments – Methane to Markets has demonstrated the potential global methane mitigation successes, but with greater financial and human resource commitments, GMI will be able to achieve even more.

With these important changes, GMI will serve to build capacity and identify needs and opportunities for advancing reduction efforts while providing a framework for ensuring coordination and maximizing the leveraging of its collective resources.

Global Methane Initiative Partners

For additional information, please visit the GMI website at www.globalmethane.org/gmi or contact the Administrative Support Group.

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