

UNECE Group of Experts Coal Mine Methane Task Force on Methane Emissions Reduction

Second Meeting

29 September 2023

16:00 - 17:30 (Geneva time)

SUMMARY

Participants:

Task Force Chair:

- Volha Roshchanka

Task Force Members:

- Evgeniy Alexeev
- Artur Badylak
- Maciej Białek
- Hannah Broadbent
- Tomas Bredariol
- Bruce Chisholm
- Ryan Driskell Tate
- Angel Esparza
- Robert Field
- Brent Fitzgerald
- Liubym Gerasymenko
- Michal Hetmanski
- Rajiw Lochan
- Richard Mattus
- Stefan Moellerherm
- Chiranjib Patra
- Ray Pilcher
- Grzegorz Plonka
- Svetlana Prokopchina
- Felicia Ruiz
- Jacek Skiba
- Sunjay Sunjay
- Sebastian Swaczyna
- Bernard Swoczyna
- Clark Talkington
- Hanling Yang

Secretariat:

- Michal Drabik

Agenda:

1. Introduction and overview of survey results
2. Activity 1: *Outreach to key stakeholders (policymakers, mining companies) to share basic resources and concepts*
3. Activity 2: *Developing guidelines for how facility-based emissions from coal mines could be presented for the public and/or for technical audiences*
4. AOB and wrap-up
5. Closing of the meeting

Item 1. Introduction and overview of survey results

1. The Chair of the Task Force (TF) opened the meeting and provided a recap on activities that the TF is pursuing.
2. The Task Force was presented a summary of the responses on the first deliverable, specifically on what the TF thought were important criteria for a communication document for policymakers, such as having a clear introduction, information on comparative information on costs, benefits, gaps of implementing VAM projects in comparison with various mitigation projects, and totaling no more than 700 words. Mr. Mattus volunteered to lead that work.
3. For the second activity, the TF voted to work on developing guidelines for how facility-based emissions from coal mines could be presented for the public and/or for technical audiences was identified as the second activity that the TF is to undertake.

Item 2. Activity 1: Outreach to key stakeholders (policymakers, mining companies) to share basic resources and concepts.

4. Under this item a presentation titled *Best practices presenting complex technical and policy information to broad audiences* was delivered by a representative of Ember. It presented a case study from Australia, explaining various ways of communication that Ember used to convey its message to different audiences. The presentation is available on the [webpage dedicated to the second meeting of the Task Force](#).
5. During the discussion that followed the presentation the following issues were raised:
 - a. There was a question whether the Government of Australia took any steps after the report (available in the “Resources” section of the [webpage dedicated to the second meeting of the Task Force](#)) was published. Ember responded that information provided in the document was included in technical recommendations.
 - b. It was mentioned that in Australia 50% of methane emissions comes from the 15% of the gassiest mines, and therefore tackling the problem should start from them.
 - c. To the question whether it is always necessary to tailor it to a specific stakeholder to ensure that a message is effectively conveyed, Ember responded that adjusting the means and the forms of communications has certain advantages, but the degree of such tailoring depends on the capacity of the entity that seeks to convey a given message.

Item 3. Activity 2: Developing guidelines for how facility-based emissions from coal mines could be presented for the public and/or for technical audiences.

6. Under this item two presentations were given. The first one, *Methane emissions from Polish coal mines - Reporting, access to information and external costs estimates* was delivered by a representative of Instrat Foundation. It covered emission reporting requirements in Poland and addressed such issues as: multiplicity of the reporting formats, different level of data granularity and the resulting difficulty of comparing it, data accessibility, as well as ways of data presentation and its clarity. The presentation is available on the [webpage dedicated to the second meeting of the Task Force](#).
7. During the discussion that followed the presentation the following issues were raised:
 - a. There was a question whether it is mandatory to maintain such data in Poland, to which Instrat responded that yes, as there is a fee that the emitter has to pay for each emitted ton. However, it was observed that such fee is very low and does not serve as a sufficient incentive to combat the emissions.
 - b. Instrat was inquired whether it reviews the data with the emitter before or after publishing it. In response, Instrat stated that it always does its best to obtain as much information from the emitter as possible. In that context, Instrat also underlined that it only republishes data in a different, more user-friendly format, but does not bear responsibility for its accuracy.
 - c. It was said to be surprising to how many different institutions, each having its own format for reporting, Polish mining companies need to report. In its response, Instrat suggested Polish Governmental Agencies (collecting data for various purposes be it safety, geology, environment, etc.) synchronize their reporting requirements to lessen the reporting burden on the emitters, and ensure consistency and comparability of data.

8. The second presentation titled *The United States Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program for Coal Mine Methane* was delivered by a representative of Advanced Resources International, Inc. It covered the U.S. regulatory program, addressing such issues as reporting requirements, different methods of emissions monitoring that are used by reporters, various ways of data presentation, etc. The presentation is available on the [webpage dedicated to the second meeting of the Task Force](#).

9. The discussion after the presentation covered the following issues:

a. A question about the difference, under the US regulation, between the CMM and CBM wells was asked, to which the presenter responded that a CBM well is considered to be a CBM well until it is mined through, when it becomes a CMM well.

b. Asked about a potential role of satellites, the presenter responded that at the moment there are no plans to use satellites for the regulatory purposes.

c. It was inquired whether EPA would allow equipment used for safety monitoring sensors to also be used for continuous emission monitoring purposes in the future. The presenter emphasized that he is not aware of any rule changes currently in development or under consideration that would allow for that scenario. Furthermore, he emphasized that he is not a staff member of EPA and cannot speak for EPA, and ultimately it would be for EPA staff to decide.

d. There was also a question about a potential use of nanotechnology, to which a response was negative, pointing to the fact that it is beyond the scope of the US GHG Reporting Programme.

10. Discussion then turned to the Activity 2, and how these presentations inform the scope of this activity. Specifically, the following issues were discussed:

a. Whether different aspects of emissions data should be presented to different stakeholders? Such view was supported by some members of the TF arguing that certain stratification is necessary. The information directed to policymakers, it was argued, should focus on collecting information on the sources of emissions so that they can undertake appropriate mitigation actions. This is the most expensive and challenging part.

b. What is an effective data presentation and whose role it is to present data in a user friendly way? Such aspects as visual appeal, availability, accuracy, and data description were discussed. Some experts observed that while the governments should focus on making data clear, efforts to interpret it or present it in a visually attractive way could be “outsourced” to other actors (e.g., NGOs). Although visualisation makes data easier to use, it is the “last mile” activity, that the government, with its limited resources, is not the best positioned to deliver. Other experts argued that the role of the Government is not only to collect data, but also, despite its budgetary constraints, to visualise it in a way that it is easy to understand.

c. In the context of a discussion on the TF’s priorities, the question was asked whether the TF should focus only on active underground mines, or also on abandoned mines or surface mines. The argument was made that considering active underground mines are the largest sources that is the easiest to tackle, the TF should initially give priority to such mines and consider addressing emissions from others only at the later stage.

Item 4. Any other business

11. No issues were raised under this agenda item.

Item 5. Closing the meeting

12. The Chair and the secretariat thanked participants for the call and closed the meeting.
