

International Centre of Excellence on Coal Mine Methane

Terms of Reference

Background

In 2010, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe's (UNECE) Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane (CMM), in collaboration with the Global Methane Initiative (GMI), published the "Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Drainage and Use in Coal Mines". The publication's primary intent was to improve mine safety at underground coal mines and encourage the use of coal mine methane, as a way of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. On 25 July 2011, the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations invited the United Nations Member States, international organizations, and the five regional commissions to consider the possibility of taking appropriate measures to ensure the application of the *Best Practice Guidance* worldwide. The ECOSOC Decision 2011/222 further recommended *Best Practice Guidance* as a global standard for coal mine safety through better methane management. Since 2013, the Group of Experts has explored the possibility of establishing an International Centre of Excellence on CMM, as a specialist centre tasked to support capacity-building activities in its field of work.

Institutional setup

The proposed International Centre of Excellence on CMM (ICE-CMM) is a non-profit entity established in a United Nations Member State, under the national laws of that Member State. In this sense, the employees of the ICE-CMM are not considered United Nations staff members.

Financing of the ICE-CMM operations is considered as an in-kind contribution by the United Nations Member State that expressed the interest to host the ICE-CMM. UNECE will solicit possible voluntary contributions from other United Nations Member States or organisations to assist the functioning of the ICE-CMM.

ICE-CMM shall submit a work plan, including deliverables and accompanying timetables, for review by the Group of Experts on CMM and subsequent approval by the Committee on Sustainable Energy, which is the parent body of the Group of Experts on CMM. ICE-CMM shall report annually to the Group of Experts on CMM and the Committee on Sustainable Energy.

Activities and projects

Having the above in mind, ICE-CMM, under the auspices of, and in close collaboration with the UNECE Group of Experts on CMM, shall support capacity-building activities in United Nations Member States through dissemination of best practices in economically viable methane abatement and utilisation, socially acceptable underground coal mine practices, and environmentally responsible methane management. To this end, ICE-CMM shall carry out the following concrete activities and projects:

- Solicit and collect relevant case studies and best practices in sustainable CMM management, provide as needed technical guidance for their development, and serve as a depository of such cases and practices;
- Organise on-site training and visits to ICE-CMM (on a non-profit basis, using as needed cost-sharing mechanisms) by CMM practitioners from interested UN Member States. Such training would help disseminate best practices through concrete hands-on experience;
- In collaboration with the UNECE secretariat and members of the Group of Experts on CMM, organise off-site training activities on the application of best practices in various coal mining regions;
- Conduct research in its domain of work, as requested by UNECE member States, under auspices of the Group of Experts on CMM, and in collaboration with relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, industry and other stakeholders in the CMM field;
- Engage with a wider coal mining community, including the civil society, mining associations, and decision-makers through the use of electronic and social media in order to raise awareness of the challenges and opportunities in the CMM sector.