

Economic Commission for Europe
Committee on Sustainable Energy

Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane
Fourteenth session

Geneva, 7-8 November 2019

Item 12 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of Conclusions and Recommendations

Draft Conclusions and Recommendations arising from the Fourteenth Session of the Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane¹

Draft for discussion

Agenda Item 3: Opening remarks.

1. The Group of Experts noted with appreciation the work of the Bureau and its efforts to manage and direct the Group's work plan between annual sessions in spite of human and financial resource constraints.

Agenda Item 4: Role of fossil fuels in decarbonizing energy systems.

2. The Group of Experts underlined the important role that fossil fuels will play in the global energy mix for the years to come. Observing that 80% of today's primary energy is fossil-based and the majority of the world's population and national economies depend on fossil energy, the Group recognized the need for modernization of the global energy sector with a special focus on coal and carbon-intensive industries in order to ensure progress in the essential transition towards a green economy and low-carbon society. Noting the premises of the just transition, the Group of Experts stressed that restructuring of sectors or regions to reduce the carbon footprint of the energy sector should be undertaken with foresight and social inclusion, and with the medium- and long-term needs of countries and people in mind.

3. The Group of Experts on Coal Mine Methane and the Group of Experts on Cleaner Electricity Systems committed to work together to explore opportunities, among their respective communities, for greater involvement of electricity producers in coal mine methane (CMM) projects.

Agenda Item 5: Ninth joint meeting of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the Coal Subcommittee of the Global Methane Initiative.

4. The Group of Experts thanked the Coal Subcommittee of the Global Methane Initiative (GMI) and its members for their continued support and collaboration.

5. The Group of Experts noted with appreciation the added value and success of events organized in cooperation with GMI within the framework of the extrabudgetary project

¹ The draft conclusions and recommendations will be reviewed by the Group of Experts after each agenda item and updated as needed.

“Dissemination of best practices in the abatement, recovery and use of methane, Phase II”, namely the seminars delivered at the Ninth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development, 15 November 2018, Kyiv, Ukraine, and at the XXVIII School of Underground Mining, 27 February 2019, Cracow, Poland, as well as capacity-building workshops on Best Practices in Coal Mine Methane Capture and Utilization, held in Ankara, Turkey (10 June 2019) and Dnipro, Ukraine (12-14 June 2019).

6. The Group of Experts expressed interest in continuing to develop joint projects with GMI and requested the secretariat to ensure, facilitate, and coordinate continued cooperation between the two entities.

7. The Group of Experts noted that the Global Methane Week, encompassing its fifteenth session and organized in cooperation with GMI, will take place in Geneva in March 2020, and requested the secretariat to ensure that the topics indicated by the Group are present in the event’s agenda.

Agenda Item 6: Report on implementation of the work plan for 2018–2019

8. The Group of Experts noted with appreciation that it has successfully delivered on its work plan for 2018–2019.

9. The Group of Experts noted with appreciation progress made in implementation of the extrabudgetary project “Dissemination of best practices in the abatement, recovery and use of methane, Phase II”, the duration of which was extended to 31 December 2020.

10. The Group of Experts noted with appreciation the number and quality of the capacity-building activities to disseminate and promote the best practices in effective methane capture and use in coal mines delivered throughout the 2018-2019 biennium and thanked the members for their active involvement in their planning and delivery.

11. The Group of Experts noted with appreciation completion of the work on the “Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Recovery and Use from Abandoned Coal Mines” (ECE/ENERGY/2019/13 and ECE Energy Series No. 31), and thanked the document’s authors, contributors, and the Editorial Review Group for their efforts in developing the publication.

12. The Group of Experts requested the secretariat to assure timely publication of the document and to start planning dissemination activities. The Group welcomed the opportunity to present the document at the XXIX School of Underground Mining, February 2020, Cracow, Poland, and at the Global Methane Week, March 2020, Geneva, Switzerland.

13. The Group of Experts noted with appreciation the updates provided on the status and activities of the International Centres of Excellence on CMM (ICE-CMM) in Poland and in China. The Group requested that the secretariat and the host entities ensure communication and coordination of their respective activities among each other and with the Group. The Group welcomed a commitment made by both Centres of Excellence to provide extrabudgetary funds to the secretariat for assuring such coordination and the necessary oversight of their activities.

14. The Group of Experts noted with appreciation the publication of Polish and Chinese versions of the Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Drainage and Recovery in Coal Mines (BPG) and thanked the ICE-CMMs in Poland and in China for their in-kind contributions for this. The Group of Experts also welcomed the publication of the BPG in Russian by ECE.

15. The Group of Experts approved the status report of the ICE-CMM in Poland and endorsed its work plan for 2020.

16. The Group of Experts approved the status report of the ICE-CMM in China and endorsed its work plan for 2020.

17. The Group of Experts congratulated the Russian Federation on its new developments in the field of CMM, in particular on establishing, within the structure of the Institute of Comprehensive Exploitation of Mineral Resources of the Russian Academy of Sciences, a national Centre dedicated to CMM. The Group requested the secretariat to engage with the relevant Russian Authorities to explore opportunities for integrating the newly created entity with the existing network of International Centres of Excellence operating under the auspices of the Group.

18. The Group of Experts welcomed the development of a risk management tool. It thanked Mr. David Creedy for leading the work on this task and the ICE-CMM in China for its support in preparing the tool and for promoting its use in coal mines in China.

19. The Group of Experts noted that, in accordance with the extended extrabudgetary project “Dissemination of best practices in the abatement, recovery and use of methane, Phase II”, a standard training module needs to be developed next year and asked the members to contribute to the work on this deliverable.

20. The Group of Experts underlined the importance and inevitability of the transition of the energy sector and invited member States and relevant organizations to cooperate with ECE on a “modernization” project that it is developing in this field. The Group of Experts welcomed a project proposal co-developed by Boston University and ECE and requested the secretariat to undertake the necessary steps to ensure continuation of that partnership and to obtain funds allowing for implementation of the project and further involvement of ECE in the topic.

Agenda Item 7: Cooperation and partnerships

21. The Group of Experts concluded that there is a need for further research in the field of CMM and its role in attaining the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It welcomed an opportunity to cooperate in that field with the European Commission’s Research Fund for Coal and Steel, and requested the secretariat to explore opportunities for joint activities.

Agenda Item 8: Work plan for 2020–2021

22. The Group of Experts noted with appreciation that the Committee on Sustainable Energy at its twenty-eighth session endorsed the work plan for 2020-2021 and extended the Group’s mandate to 31 December 2021.

23. Following a discussion on future activities, the Group of Experts recommended that it remains involved in activities related to the role of coal and other fossil fuels in the transition to a low-carbon economy. The need for an open and inclusive dialogue based on facts was underlined and the Group invited other subsidiary bodies of the ECE Committee on Sustainable Energy to join the discussion and to develop a common position on the energy transition.

Agenda Item 9: Gender issues in the coal mining industry

24. The Group of Experts requested that measures aimed at raising awareness on barriers to women's engagement and professional development in the mining and the energy sectors should be promoted at all activities organized by the Group to the extent possible. In light of its recent interest in abandoned mines, the Group addressed the problems and challenges faced by women as a result of the gradual phase-out of coal in many countries around the world. It discussed particularities of the situation of female employees in the aftermath of mine closures and requested the Bureau and the secretariat to engage with the relevant stakeholders in order to identify actions that it could undertake to alleviate the identified problems.

Agenda Item 10: Preparations for the fifteenth session of the Group of Experts

25. The fifteenth session will be held in March 2020 in Geneva as a part of the Global Methane Week organized jointly by ECE and GMI.

26. The Group of Experts recommended the following topics to be featured in the Global Methane Week's agenda: **to be added during the meeting**.

Agenda Item 11: Any other business

27. The Group of Experts noted the need to expand its membership from both within and beyond the ECE region, and to secure additional extrabudgetary resources. Both are prerequisites to be able to deliver on the current work plan. The Group requested the secretariat to work, in cooperation with the Bureau, to identify new members, as well as potential sources of funding.

Agenda Item 13: Adoption of the report and close of the meeting

28. The report of the meeting was adopted, including the conclusions and recommendations, subject to any necessary editing and formatting.
